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Automotive

Buyer's market in 2009, says Michael Goetz

pg 24

Quebec goes against get-tough Tory policy

AGENDA When Parliament resumes in the new year, the Conservatives are making it clear that plans to get tough on youth crime by strengthening the Youth Criminal Justice Act will be high on their agenda.

Crimes

- The rate for all youth crimes in Quebec in 2007 was 45 per cent below the national average.

But one place in Canada has long taken a different approach — Quebec.

Tackling youth crime was among the Conservatives' key election planks, but it was also one of the issues that angered Quebecers and prevented the Tories from broadening their support in the province.

Figures compiled by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics show Quebec's emphasis on prevention and rehabilitation over incarceration has served the province well. In fact, the youth crime rate in Quebec has consistently been the lowest in all of Canada.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

IntelleVision pg 39

No Canadian Idol in 2009

Travel pg 29

Hiking in the Utah desert

ShareYourViews
torontoletters@metronews.ca

Soldiers **Fallen heroes return**

NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Family members cry as they walk to the hearse yesterday where the casket of Cpl. Thomas James Hamilton rests at CFB Trenton in Trenton, Ont. Two other fallen Canadian soldiers, Pte. John Michael Roy Curwin and Pte. Justin Peter Jones, were also honoured. They were all from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment based at CFB Gagetown, N.B.

Debate over mission at metronews.ca/canada.

Toronto ready to rumble

City looking at noise strips to separate streets, bike lanes

Toronto is looking at installing rumble strips — grooves in the pavement — to separate cars from bikes along a major bike route planned for Lawrence Avenue East.

Rumble strips have traditionally been used on expressways such as Highway 401, producing a staccato noise that warns drivers they're veering onto the shoulder.

"These are for motorists who are sometimes on their cellphone or have a coffee in their hand."
Coun. Adrian Heaps

"We're looking at some kind of demarcation that is safe for cars and safe for bikes," said Coun. Adrian Heaps, chair of the Toronto Cycling Committee. "The rumble strip is one of the options we're looking at.

"We know we need something," Heaps said. "These are for motorists who are sometimes on their cellphone or have a coffee in their hand; they hear the sound and veer back into line again."

Earlier this month, city council approved installing bike lanes on Lawrence, spanning Scarborough from Victoria Park Avenue east to Rouge Hills Drive near the Pickering border.

Bike lanes would be installed on both sides of Lawrence. East of Kingston Road, the work would be included as part of planned road reconstruction next year and in 2010.

Rumble strips can work as an audible reminder to drivers on streets where traffic moves at 60 or 70 km/h, said Rama Bhat, a professor at Montreal's Concordia University.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Auto bailout comes with strings: Bryant

DIFFERENT Rescue cash for Chrysler — controlled by a deep-pocketed private New York firm — will have strict terms to prevent the automaker from taking advantage of Canadian taxpayers, warns Ontario's economic development minister.

"Chrysler will have to be treated differently," Michael Bryant said yesterday.

Background

- Cerberus, a giant New York-based private equity firm, bought most of Chrysler from Daimler in 2007 but it has been trying to unload it for months as losses mount.

He promised the Detroit Three automakers will get the life-saving financial "CPR" they need to prevent the eventual loss of more than 500,000 jobs in Ontario predicted in a new study if General Motors, Ford and Chrysler were to go bust. But there will be strings attached, particularly with Chrysler, which has a car assembly plant in Brampton and makes minivans in Windsor.

The company's American parent is controlled by Cerberus Capital Management LP, which manages $27 billion US in assets and has been under fire in Washington for not putting more of its own money into the faltering automaker.

Details are "yet to be determined" but could include special warrants placing restrictions on any profits taken by Chrysler at the expense of taxpayers, Bryant said. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Funeral for slain Mississauga girl today
Slain Mississauga schoolgirl Alexandra Firgan-Hewie will be laid to rest today. A service was scheduled for 11 a.m. in the chapel of the Low & Low Funeral Home in Port Perry, north of Oshawa. The 13-year-old's body was found in a backyard of a home on Bonnymede Road in Mississauga last Thursday. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Local

Toy drive for boy shot in leg

Residents, politicians and police have started a Christmas toy collection project for 12-year-old Terrance Bascombe, who was shot in the leg for no apparent reason Dec. 13. Donations, which will be given to Bascombe and other children in his housing complex, can be dropped off at 12 Division police station at 200 Trethewey Dr. until Dec. 22.

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Tomorrow's Metro

Music

Metro reviews new CDs from Soulja Boy, Ghostface Killah, Fall Out Boy and Keyshia Cole.

metronews.ca
What's online today.

Read Caroline Kennedy's star power making rivals for Senate seat nervous at **metronews.ca/world**

Lotteries

Ontario Pick 3: 2 3 4; **Ontario Pick 4** : 7 7 1 8
Encore: 7818829
Daily Keno: 5, 7, 11, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 29, 32, 34, 43, 49, 54, 56, 61, 67, 68, 69 & 70
These results are not official.

Assault victim to fight appeal

Police dispute ruling that orders board to pay $215,000

Marian Evans says she had expected to lose and wind up "financially devastated" when she sued Toronto police for an assault committed by a former officer almost 30 years ago.

"(But) I went through this process to get the truth ... to heal basically," said Evans, 54, yesterday.

Last month, following a civil trial in September, the Ontario Superior Court awarded Evans $215,000 and legal costs and held the Toronto Police Services Board should pay because it was "vicariously responsible." John David Sproule, the former constable, was ordered to pay $25,000.

Last Friday, the board filed a notice of appeal. Evans says she will continue to "fight for what is right."

In the early hours of Jan. 7, 1979, Evans, then 24, was stopped by Sproule, who detained her, drove her to a secluded area and tried to grab her breast and kiss her. She complained and he was charged with indecent assault. He was fined $1,000 and quit the force.

After visiting a psychiatrist in 2001 and realizing the impact the assault had on her life, Evans commenced legal proceedings in 2002.

The board, in its notice of appeal, is asking the Ontario Court of Appeal to set aside the trial decision and dismiss the claim as it was initiated 23 years after the assault. It also states the judge "erred in the application of the law regarding vicarious liability as it related to the Toronto Police Services Board." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Limitations Act

- Evans said she knew she was outside the four-year limit under the Limitations Act.

RENE JOHNSTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Marian Evans was assaulted 30 years ago by a Toronto Police Service officer and won a settlement issued by the Ontario Superior Court, a verdict the police are appealing.

Your Pearson survival guide

HOLIDAYS Flying off for the holidays? Get in line — and get informed.

About 100,000 people fly in and out of Pearson International Airport during the holiday season.

Trish Krale, of the Greater Toronto Airports Authority, urges people to seek GTAA workers, identified by bright blue jackets, to help troubleshoot problems. Also, she says passengers should learn what items are forbidden or restricted, keep Christmas gifts unwrapped and check flight times before arriving.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

FIRES Hundreds fled two factories after a fire broke out at Planter's Peanut factory and at Vienna Fine Foods. No one is believed to be injured.

FLY Canadians are flying this holiday season despite the economic crisis, experts say. Airline demand is reportedly up seven per cent compared with last year. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Shooting target facing charges

A 19-year-old man faces three charges after Durham police went to a home where he was shot at and found a Taser and marijuana. On Dec. 13, police say two men, armed with at least one gun, went to a home on Denmar Road and assaulted a 22-year-old man. They fired a single shot in the direction of another man, but the bullet missed. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

South Asian groups uniting to fight poverty among immigrants

PLAN Members of several South Asian community groups have united to find out how they can fit into Ontario's poverty reduction strategy.

They share a feeling that different racial groups are treated differently in the strategy's big picture.

"The government has recognized that poverty is an issue in Canada that is unacceptable," said Fariah Chowdhry, with the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA).

A gathering of about 100 in Scarborough last night was aimed at getting not just service groups but also the community involved in anti-poverty work.

Chowdhry said what was lacking in the strategy is how different ethnic / racial communities face poverty in disproportionate levels.

There is a feeling that many new immigrants are unable to escape poverty when they are being taken advantage of as minimum wage and often less than minimum wage paid workers despite their skills and professional experience.

"The South Asian community has specific needs particularly around internationally trained professionals," said Neethan Shan, executive director of CASSA.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Woman gets $80,000 from stolen lotto ticket

OLG The Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. gave out $80,000 to a woman who was victimized by a lottery retailer.

Jamie Antinori, 49, bought the winning 6/49 lottery ticket in 2004 in Burlington.

According to an OPP press release "the manager of a Burlington convenience store allegedly stole a lottery ticket with a winning prize of $80, 341."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Striking staff hold protests

Sit-in, 'block party' pressure York U. to get back to table

From Canada's financial hub to the centre of campus power, striking staff members staged protests yesterday to pressure the administration at becalmed York University to come back to the bargaining table.

Timeline

- Nearly 50,000 undergraduates have been without classes for nearly six weeks.

About 20 members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3903 and some student supporters spent all night Monday outside the office of York president Mamdouh Shoukri, demanding his commitment in writing to host a public forum on the strike during the first week of January.

Far to the south at King and Bay streets, other strikers and their supporters held a "block party" on the sidewalk to inform office workers and holiday shoppers why they have been off the job since Nov. 6.

As of yesterday afternoon, Shoukri still had not met with the protesters outside his 9th floor office, and the group said they were prepared to spend another night camped out with sleeping bags.

"We feel York hasn't done enough to communicate with the university community during this strike, which is why we want a public forum on the issues," said York graduate assistant Amrit Heer.

York spokesperson Alex Bilyk said Monday the protesters were holding an unlawful picket by blocking the corridor, which he said was private property. He suggested they focus on negotiating a deal with the school.

No talks are slated, and the school year will almost certainly have to be extended into May if a deal is not struck over the holidays.

York offered a 9.25 per cent raise over three years, and the union is seeking eight per cent more over two years and more job security. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

COLIN MCCONNELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

CUPE and students brought its protest downtown to Bay Street yesterday to protest the York University strike.

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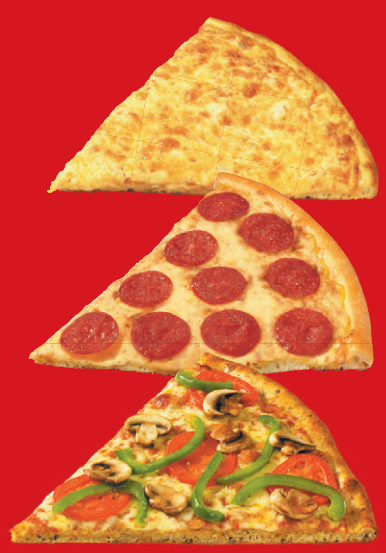

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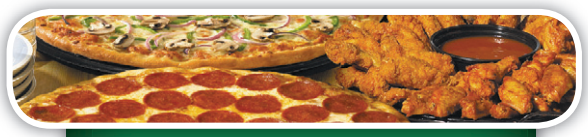

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Three arrested after party turns rowdy
Police arrested three 19-year-old Burlington men at a weekend house party after about 100 guests began throwing beer cans and bottles at officers and their cruisers. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Fake degree costs woman Bay St. job

A promising law student has become the first casualty of a bogus degree scam exposed recently.

Quami Frederick, 28, has quit the Bay St. law firm where she was to article after graduating in the spring. A Toronto Star investigation found she had bought her undergraduate degree from a diploma mill.

Frederick not only used fake transcripts from St. George's University in Grenada to get into Osgoode Hall in 2006, her marks earned at the law school were inflated on transcripts she tendered to law firm Wildeboer Dellelce LLP.

The altered marks, with a C upgraded to A in some cases, came to light when the law firm and Osgoode shared notes on Frederick.

She was one of 290 students admitted to Osgoode Hall in 2006 from 2,500 applicants. Her bogus Bachelor of Science degree from Grenada came with a stellar 3.93 grade point average.

Asked about her Osgoode Hall marks, Frederick said it no longer matters.

"I'm finished. I have no career in law. Nobody is going to hire me," said the tearful woman, who said she is a single mother. "I'm just going to save face and save the university further embarrassment."

The scandal has left her destitute, she said, with more than $80,000 in student loans and other debts.

Frederick, who lives in a townhouse in Rexdale, said she is Canadian born and grew up in Grenada.

She said she wants to quit Osgoode Hall but said the "rules of the law school" compel her to submit to a formal inquiry she believes can only end in her expulsion.

In the last three days Frederick has become a cause célèbre among bloggers on the Internet, who have posted reactions ranging from outrage and mockery to praise for Frederick for beating the system.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Many Canadians involved

- At least 220 Canadians were among 9,600 people who bought bogus degrees from a Washington-based diploma mill that operated for six years from 1999.

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Bookstores stick to roots for survival

Thirteen years ago, independent bookstores were hit by a storm called Chapters that grew to include Indigo and Amazon. The future of the smaller shops appeared bleak. But the city's indie bookstores have proven resilient.

"There was a Chapters that opened a block away from Pages 10 years ago and we are doing fine," said Marc Glassman, owner of Pages Books and Magazines, an eclectic store with big windows that look onto one of the hippest sections of Queen Street West.

For Pages and others, establishing roots in the community and differentiating themselves from the big box outlets have been key to survival.

Type Books, which has opened three stores in just over two years, runs weekly literacy classes with three local schools. It also has a children's story time and has a gallery in the basement at the Queen Street West store (the others are in Forest Hill Village and on the Danforth).

"We try to make it a vibrant place to be so people will want to come and share the experience of books."
Type Books co-owner Joanne Saul

"We use these services to make ourselves a real hub in the community," said co-owner Joanne Saul. "We've made it more than a retail experience. We try to make it a vibrant place to be so people will want to come and share the experience of books."

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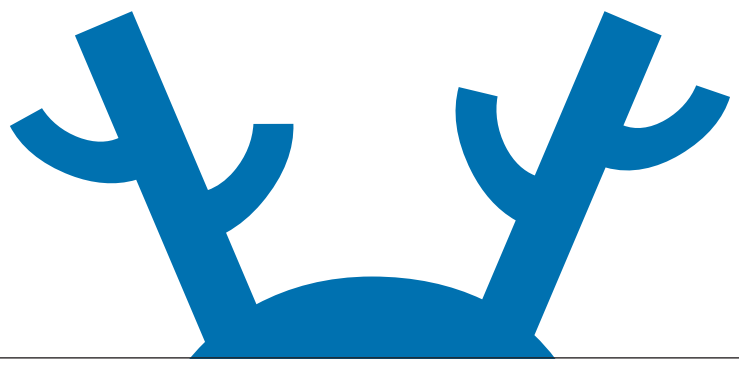

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  - Cambridge Center
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  - Northumberland Mall
- COOKSTOWN
  - Cookstown Outlet Mall (kiosk)
- DON MILLS
  - Two Park Centre
- ETOBICOKE
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  - 7357 Woodbine Ave.
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- MISSISSAUGA
  - 980 Eglinton Ave. E
  - 2800 Skymark Ave.
  - 6965 Davand Dr.
  - Central Parkway Mall
  - Dixie Value Mall
  - Erin Mills Town Centre
  - Heartland Power Centre
  - Mississauga Chinese Centre
  - Sheridan Centre
  - Square One Shopping Centre
  - Westgate SmartCentres
  - Westwood Mall
- NEWMARKET
  - Upper Canada Mall
- NORTH YORK
  - 170 Rimrock Rd
  - 1635 Lawrence Ave.W.
  - 2081 Steeles Ave. W
  - Bayview Village
  - Crossroads Plaza
  - Empress Walk
  - Lawrence Square
  - North York Sheridan Mall
  - Sheppard Centre
  - Yorkgate Mall
- OAKVILLE
  - Hopedale Mall (kiosk)
  - Oakville Place
  - Winston Power Centre
- ORANGEVILLE
  - 114 Broadway Ave.
- OSHAWA
  - Five Points Mall
  - Oshawa Centre
- PICKERING
  - 570 Kingston Rd
  - Pickering Town Centre
- RICHMOND HILL
  - Elgin Mills Crossing
  - Hillcrest Mall
  - Richmond Heights Plaza
  - Time Square Shopping Centre
- SCARBOROUGH
  - 259 Morningside Ave.
  - Bridlewood Mall (Kiosk)
  - Cedarbrae Mall (kiosk)
  - Chartwell Shopping Center
  - Eglinton Square
  - Kennedy Commons
  - Malvern Town Centre
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Terror suspect denied bail

Judge rules no 'exceptional circumstances'

A member of the so-called Toronto 18 was denied bail for the fourth time yesterday, after the Ontario Court of Appeal declined to review a decision made by the Superior Court in June.

Amin Durrani has been in custody since his June 2, 2006 arrest. He was charged with two counts of knowingly participating in or contributing to a terrorist group.

In his 13-page ruling, Justice James Macpherson concluded he couldn't find the "special or exceptional circumstances" necessary in bringing Amin Durrani's case before the Ontario Court.

Durrani's lawyer, Manuel Azevedo, had argued the Ontario Court of Appeal should review the Superior Court's decision to reject Durrani's bail, suggesting a Superior Court judge might find it difficult to review the ruling of a colleague.

MacPherson disagreed.

"If the evidence is to be heard at the bail review, the Superior Court is better positioned to hear the review; it has all the facilities, staff and mechanisms to respond to this necessity," he wrote.

"I conclude that, absent special circumstances, courts of appeal should deal with bail pending appeal and superior courts should deal with bail prior to and during a trial."

Durrani's bail was first denied shortly after his arrest in August 2006. Two subsequent appeals to the Superior Court were also denied in July 2007 and June 2008. A total of 18 adults and youths were arrested in the massive police sweep in 2006 and accused of belonging to an al Qaeda-inspired cell.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Group's plans

- According to testimony heard during the trial of another accused, the group had plans to storm parliament, behead politicians and detonate fertilizer truck bombs outside CBC headquarters, the Toronto Stock Exchange and the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station.

News in brief

CRIME Durham police arrested a man after receiving reports of a naked man walking a dog. The man was spotted Monday shortly before 8 a.m. at an Uxbridge address. Police responded to a call and found the 43-year-old man, with only a blanket over his shoulders, in a nearby backyard. The man's mother was nearby and told police her son had not taken his medication. While searching the man's apartment for his medication police discovered a loaded shotgun. They arrested the man under the Mental Health Act and transported him to Lakeridge Health for assessment.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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*Includes all taxes and freight. Prizes may not be exactly as shown.

Supreme Court to give BCE reasoning on Friday
The Supreme Court will release the reasons for its decision regarding the ill-fated takeover of BCE Inc. Friday. The top court overturned a ruling in June and gave unanimous approval to the leveraged buyout. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada

Canadians less wealthy

A new Statistics Canada report has found the net worth of Canadian households dropped about $191 billion in the third quarter as stock prices tumbled. Statistics Canada says the 3.2 per cent decline in household net worth was the largest percentage drop since the third quarter of 1998, when Canadian stock prices fell in response to the Asian financial crisis. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Imported workers face uncertain future

The sudden layoffs of 70 imported labourers at an Ontario mushroom farm this month highlights the precarious future for a growing pool of unemployed temporary foreign workers as the economy plunges into recession.

The federal program, massively expanded in the past two years, was designed to import workers on a temporary basis in response to labour shortages and an ever-changing labour market.

But the abrupt turmoil in the economy in recent months has immigration and labour experts worried a vulnerable workforce will soon be jobless and struggling to survive as they wait for their permits to expire.

Experts are calling on the government to halt the program immediately until they have a plan on what to do with the workers already here.

300,000
The number of temporary foreign workers currently in Canada.

While some critics are concerned these workers would be further exploited by employers trying to push down wages and cut costs, others worry the shrinking job market will lead to an anti-immigrant backlash.

"If the number of foreign workers remains strong despite the slowing economy," said University of Victoria labour law professor Judy Fudge, "it'd show that Canadian employers are simply addicted to low-paid workers without rights."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Expect more bloodshed in 2009, general says

"There will be violence."

That, in a nutshell, was the blunt assessment yesterday of what Canadian troops both in Afghanistan and at home can expect in 2009 as Canada's seven-year-old Afghan mission enters another uncertain new year.

The warning came from Lt.-Gen. Michel Gauthier, the head of the Canadian Expeditionary Force Command (CEFCOM), after several days of meetings with military and political leaders in Afghanistan.

With an expected influx of U.S. troops, the year ahead promises to be a rough one, Gauthier — the commanding officer for all Canadian soldiers deployed overseas — acknowledged in a frank discussion with reporters at Kandahar Airfield.

"The sky is not falling. We are making a difference."
Michel Gauthier

"There is a sense that the tide that seemed to have turned in a negative sense in the last year is reversible," said Gauthier.

"The sky is not falling. We are making a difference."

As many as 20,000 additional U.S. troops are expected to bolster the American ranks by this coming spring. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec **Bravo!**

JACQUES BOISSINOT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec Premier Jean Charest applauds after members of his government caucus and himself were sworn in yesterday at the Quebec legislature.

News in brief

MEETING Finance Minister Jim Flaherty is seeking economic co-operation from the provinces at the financial summit in Saskatoon today. In his meeting with the provincial finance ministers, he hopes to gain consensus on how to tackle the worst economic slump in 17 years, a move that could also strengthen the minority Conservatives in their expected showdown with opposition parties over the Jan. 27 budget. The tanking economy appears to also have concentrated the minds of the provincial finance ministers. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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New tanks arrive a year late

The first batch of used battle tanks that Canada purchased from the Dutch have arrived more than a year behind schedule. Lt.-Gen. Andrew Leslie, head of the Canadian army, said 40 Leopard 2A-4 tanks rolled off a supply ship last week. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Disappearance of diplomat in Niger remains a mystery

A prominent Canadian diplomat missing in Africa may have been abducted as part of a complex conflict involving the government of Niger, rebel groups and international mining companies.

Rebels seeking to overthrow the country's democratic government at first claimed, and then denied, responsibility for kidnapping the men.

The claim was published and recanted by a group that says uranium mining companies from Canada and other countries are destroying their land.

Rebels say local people have not received a fair share of the royalties from uranium, which accounts for more than two-thirds of Niger's exports.

A handful of Canadian companies own 40 per cent of Niger's mining permits, according to statistics from the Foreign Affairs Department.

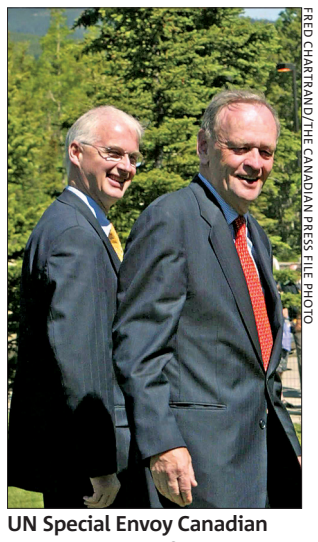
The abduction claim and retraction were published on the website for a splinter faction that broke from the main rebel group, the Niger Movement for Justice.

A man described as the splinter group's No. 2 figure declared on its website Monday that Fowler was among four people seized in a commando operation.

He said that the Front des Forces de Redressement had abducted the diplomat to send a "strong signal" about Canada's support for the government. It said Fowler was doing well and would soon be transferred to a safe location.

The resistance group's online statement was then contradicted on the same website yesterday in an entry published under the name of its leader, Mohamed Awtchiki Kriska.

THE CANADIAN PRESS


FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE PHOTO

UN Special Envoy Canadian Robert Fowler, left, seen here with former prime minister Jean Chrétien earlier this year.

Who is he?

- Robert Fowler was a senior adviser to several prime ministers, starting with Pierre Trudeau.
- He played a leading role in thwarting the trade of so-called blood diamonds in the 1990s.
- Fowler, 64, was on assignment as the United Nations' special envoy to Niger when he and fellow Canadian diplomat Louis Guay disappeared Sunday.

Canadians think Ignatieff a big improvement for Liberals, poll finds

SURVEY A new poll suggests Canadians are favourably impressed by Michael Ignatieff's installation as federal Liberal leader.

Half of respondents to The Canadian Press/Harris-Decima survey said they reacted positively when the Liberal party last week chose Ignatieff to replace Stéphane Dion at the helm.

Only 11 per cent reacted negatively while 36 per cent had a neutral opinion about the change.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

JAIL TIME Three young men convicted of kidnapping and confining the son of a millionaire Vancouver businessman will find out today how long they'll spend in prison. Graham McMynn was snatched at gunpoint near his family's posh south Vancouver home in April 2006. A massive police operation climaxed in McMynn's rescue 10 days later and the arrest of six people.

POLITICS New Democrat Leader Jack Layton said yesterday the federal budget should reflect the coalition's demands, but he said that would take a miracle. He added there was still no talk of helping the thousands of people who have lost their jobs in the past few months. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Gondola tower collapses at Whistler resort
At least a dozen passengers were trapped after a gondola tower collapsed on a ski mountain in Whistler, B.C. yesterday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

B.C. diplomat suspended after drunk driving claim

The Polish government has suspended its recently appointed consul general in Vancouver in the wake of an allegation of impaired-driving following a minor traffic accident.

Press officer Sylwia Domisiewicz at Poland's embassy in Ottawa said yesterday that officials are still seeking further details on the incident last Friday involving diplomat Tomasz Lis.

"So far we have the decision that Mr. Lis is suspended, so he's no longer the consul of Poland in Vancouver," she said. "He's suspended pending further decisions."

In Warsaw, Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski hinted earlier that he may fire Lis.

Sikorski told The Associated Press "we will eliminate from public service" people who "do not know how to behave abroad."

The warning was also related to an incident in which two drunken Polish lawmakers were accused by a hotel owner in Cyprus of causing damages worth more than a thousand euros while driving golf carts.

Vancouver police confirm the driver of a car with consul licence plates was arrested after being found to be over the legal limit for alcohol following an accident involving a city fire truck.

Fire department spokesman Capt. Gabe Roder said a 2009 Volvo rear-ended the fire truck as it was heading back to its downtown Vancouver fire hall.

"The firefighters didn't even feel it," he said. Roder said the fire truck caught up with the car at a traffic bottleneck a block away and its crew informed the driver that he'd hit their truck.

Firefighters then called police, standard protocol when a city vehicle is involved in an accident, he said.

They did not initially suspect the driver was impaired but "it appeared something was different, something was odd."

Police say a charge of impaired driving has been forwarded to the Crown but as yet Lis has not been charged.

Lis assumed the Vancouver consular post only a few weeks ago. The incident took place the same day the B.C. Crown announced no charges would be filed against four RCMP officers involved in the death of newly arrived Polish immigrant Robert Dziekanski at Vancouver International Airport last year. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Diplomatic driving

- In another case, Russian diplomat Andrei Knyazev avoided Canadian charges in 2001 after mowing down two women on a sidewalk in Ottawa, killing one and injuring the other. He refused to take a breathalyzer at the scene, claiming diplomatic immunity.
- He was expelled from Canada, but once home Knyazev was charged and convicted with involuntary manslaughter.

News in brief

PHARMACEUTICALS Canada's generic drug makers have begun arguing their court challenge to rules barring them from copying brand-name medicines, whose patents have expired for at least eight years. The generics argue the rules cost consumers tens of millions of dollars in extra drug costs, and say the government exceeded its powers in making the regulations. Brand-name drug makers argue it's only fair they have protection from cheaper knock-offs. The Federal Court hearing is expected to last three days. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Alberta man pleads not guilty to murder of girl on walking trail

ACCUSED An Alberta man charged with first-degree murder in the death of a teenage girl on a walking trail near her home has pleaded not guilty.

Ross Edward Kleman was scheduled to appear on circuit television today.

But his lawyer appeared on his behalf instead.

Kleman, 43, is accused in the slaying of 14-year-old Emily Stauffer on a popular wooded path near a residential area Sept. 27.

The small, quiet community of Edson, Alta., was in shock after news of the murder spread, and the town was on edge for weeks until an arrest was made earlier this month.

Defence lawyer Jan Terhart indicated Kleman has elected to be tried by judge and jury.

His next court appearance is scheduled for Jan. 20.

Terhart said his client, Kleman, will be applying for bail.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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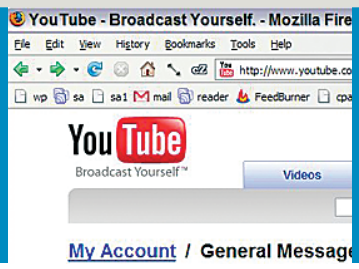
Florida police close books on 1981 murder of six-year-old Adam Walsh

A serial killer who died more than a decade ago is the person who decapitated Adam Walsh, the six-year-old son of America's Most Wanted host John Walsh, in 1981, police in Florida said yesterday. The niece of the suspect, Ottis Toole, told the boy's father that her uncle confessed on his deathbed that he killed Adam. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World



YouTube officer pleads not guilty

A New York City police officer has pleaded not guilty after being caught on a YouTube video knocking a cyclist to the ground. The Manhattan district attorney's office said yesterday the charges against Patrick Pogan could lead to prison if he's convicted. The 23-year-old officer is accused of falsifying business records and filing a false instrument. The video of the bodycheck that knocked over the cyclist has been viewed more than 1.6 million times on YouTube. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Group claims responsibility for French dynamite threat

PARIS Police acting on a warning yesterday found a bundle of dynamite inside a Paris department store at the height of the Christmas season, and a group demanding that France withdraw from Afghanistan claimed responsibility.

Sticks of dynamite tied together but without a detonator were found in the Printemps department store, a favoured shopping destination for tourists and a Christmas season attraction because of its festive window displays.

Interior Minister Michele Alliot-Marie said the explosives appeared "relatively old." Police said they were found in the third floor washroom of the menswear department. Five sticks were found together, officials said.

"There was no risk of explosion," the minister said.

Sarkozy

- French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who has increased France's troop levels in Afghanistan, quickly stressed that he would not bend to terrorism.
- France has 2,800 troops in Afghanistan.

French news agency Agence France-Presse said it received a letter yesterday morning from a group calling itself the Afghan Revolutionary Front saying that several bombs had been planted in the store. Police said they searched the store and found the dynamite because of the warning.

Alliot-Marie said the group was "totally unknown" to police but that the claim was being studied.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Greek youths break into TV centre, interrupt broadcast

UNREST Protesters forced their way into Greece's state NET television news studio yesterday and interrupted a broadcast featuring the prime minister so they could urge viewers to join ongoing anti-government demonstrations.

For more than a minute, about 10 youths blocked a broadcast showing a speech by Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis.

They displayed banners reading: Stop Watching, Get Out Onto the Streets, and Free Everyone Who Has Been Arrested. No one was hurt, and no arrests were reported.

"This goes beyond any limit."
TV exec Christos Panagopoulos

NET chairman Christos Panagopoulos claimed the protesters violently forced their way inside. "This goes beyond any limit," he said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Inquiry starts against governor

Illinois legislators launched an unprecedented impeachment inquiry yesterday against embattled Gov. Rod Blagojevich, who showed no sign of going down without a fight.

An impeachment panel met briefly and then adjourned until today, giving Blagojevich time to send a representative to the hearings, which may last into January.

Legislators on Monday shelved the idea of setting a special election where voters would fill the vacant Senate seat of president-elect Barack Obama — the seat the governor is accused of trying to sell before his arrest last week on federal corruption charges.

"Frontier justice will not prevail in this proceeding. A rush to judgment does not serve the people of the state well."
Barbara Currie

But the House also voted 113-0 to create a bipartisan committee that will recommend whether Blagojevich should be impeached. That 21-member panel met for about an hour yesterday, with members making speeches about the gravity of the scandal.

Committee chairwoman Barbara Currie began the meeting by saying the Blagojevich scandal had created a "crisis of confidence" in state government. But she cautioned panel members against moving too fast.

"Frontier justice will not prevail in this proceeding. A rush to judgment does not serve the people of the state well."

Currie agreed to resume the hearing today so Blagojevich's Chicago lawyer, Ed Genson, could attend. The governor was invited to the hearing but didn't reply personally to the panel, choosing instead to send Genson. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Iraqi shoe-thrower faces criminal proceedings

CUSTODY The journalist who threw his shoes at U.S. President George W. Bush was handed over to the Iraqi judiciary, an Iraqi official said yesterday, a move that ordinarily signals the start of criminal proceedings.

Hundreds took to the streets yesterday for a second day to demand the release of Muntadhar al-Zeidi, who gained folk-hero status when he hurled both his shoes at Bush during a news conference Sunday in Baghdad.

Al-Zeidi was initially held by the prime minister's guards and later turned over to the Iraqi army's Baghdad command. The command, in turn, handed him over to the judiciary, the official said.

Referring the case to the judiciary usually signals the beginning of a lengthy process that could end in a criminal trial. Cases referred to the judiciary are given to a judge who reviews the evidence and recommends whether to hold a trial or release the defendant.

Another panel then sets a trial date and appoints judges to hear the case. The process can take months.

HATEM MOUSSA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Palestinians from the Popular Resistance Committees attend a demonstration yesterday in Gaza City, calling for the release of the Iraqi journalist who threw shoes at U.S. President George W. Bush.

Earlier yesterday, Interior Ministry spokesman Maj.-Gen. Abdul-Karim Khalaf said al-Zeidi could face charges of insulting a foreign leader and the Iraqi prime minister, who was standing next to Bush when the shoes were thrown.

The offence carries a maximum penalty of two years in jail.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UN adopts resolution that says Middle East peace process is irreversible
The UN Security Council has adopted a resolution stressing that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process initiated last year is irreversible. It backs efforts by the two parties to conclude a peace treaty. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Near-total face transplant in U.S.

The first near-total face transplant in the United States has been done on a woman at the Cleveland Clinic, the hospital announced yesterday.

Reconstructive surgeon Dr. Maria Siemionow replaced nearly all of the woman's face — 80 per cent — with that of a dead female donor in an operation a couple weeks ago.

The patient's name and age were not released. The hospital plans a news conference today and would not give details until then.

The nature of the injuries or disfigurement that prompted the case aren't known. Such transplants are controversial because they are aimed at improving a patient's quality of life rather than saving it, and require recipients to take immune-suppressing drugs for the rest of their life. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Partial transplants

- The world's first partial face transplant occurred in France three years ago on a woman who was mauled by her dog. Two others have been announced since then: A Chinese farmer attacked by a bear and a European man disfigured by a genetic condition.

23 die as bus with tour guides plunges into ravine in Israel

DEATHS A bus filled with Russian tour guides scouting out Israeli locations plunged into a desert ravine near the Red Sea resort town of Eilat yesterday, killing at least 23 people.

The driver of another tour bus said the vehicle sped by in a no-passing zone, lost control, and crashed through a guard rail and rolled down the slope.

Television footage showed the blue bus overturned at the bottom of a ravine, debris strewn along the slope it rolled down from the road. Bodies in white bags were laid out in a row at the bottom of the ravine, which was swarming with rescue workers and soldiers.

"Dozens of wounded and dead were strewn along the slope."
Gabi Baribo

The passengers' luggage was tossed into a pile nearby.

"Dozens of wounded and dead were strewn along the slope," said medic Gabi Baribo, who was on the scene. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Winter **Yes, this is Arizona!**

JAKE BACON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wyatt Bauman, 11, walks in his neighbourhood in Flagstaff, Ariz., yesterday. Around a foot of snow had fallen in the Flagstaff area by 9 a.m. The National Weather Service says a stronger storm that will hit northern Arizona today could bring that total to between 20 and 36 inches.

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Comment & Views

Comment

Winter wonderland

Vancouverites wondering what happened to global warming

TheWestView

Paul Sullivan
Journalist & Media Consultant

I've had it with all the complaining from the Prairies about the alleged "deep freeze" they're enduring.

Cold it may be, but they're used to it. They even have those little plug thingies sticking out of the front end of their combines to keep them nice and warm. And I understand they have to wear long underwear between October and April or face a stiff fine.

Those people are prepared.

Here in Vancouver, however, it's only going up to zero today, (gasp!) and these Arctic conditions have taken us completely by surprise. It's a state of emergency. Our local competitor, the Vancouver Sun, is so swept up in the general panic, yesterday morning's front page featured a 200-point headline warning: "Get ready for 10 days below zero."

Below the fold there's an entirely serious piece from star columnist Pete McMartin sternly taking the Environment Canada guy to task for failing to predict a five-centimetre snowfall. It's a scandal!

But we ain't seen nothin' yet. According to the long-term forecast from Accuweather, cold records could be smashed over the next few days. The overnight temperature could plummet to –11 C. The chastened Environment Canada guy has been forced to admit there may even be more snow coming.

Whatever happened to global warming?

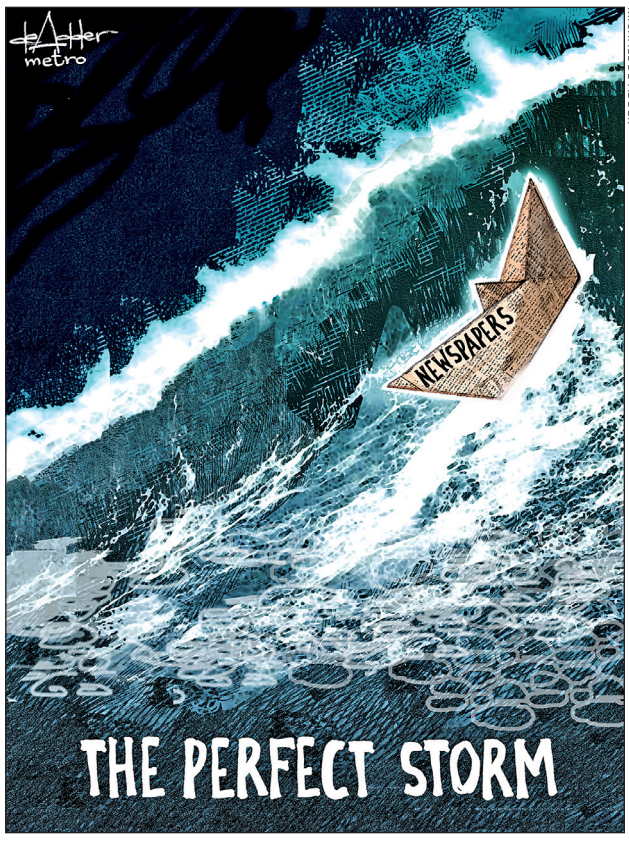
Laugh you may, but this is a city that practises annual winter denial. The beaches and sidewalk cafes are busy (thanks to those industrial-grade heaters), and every year we wait for a mild day and dash out with the lawn mower and the camera so we can send our hapless eastern relatives pictures of us mowing the lawn in December.

There will be no lawns mowed this December. There will be no lawns this December. We may even — wait for it — be forced to endure a white Christmas and all the hoo-hah that goes with it.

Of course, our dirty little secret is that it snows every winter in Vancouver; at least it has since I've lived here — nearly 20 years. It usually lasts for a couple days and then the rain comes and mercifully washes it all away. But every time it snows, you'd think it was the first time. We crash into each other with reckless abandon, close all the schools and lose power, forced to huddle in the dark by candlelight until it blows over.

One day, perhaps, we'll all go, "Oh!" and buy hats and mitts and shovels and get on with it. In the meantime, if this year's Christmas card includes a photo of Uncle Fred mowing his lawn in December, be suspicious. Be very suspicious.

Paul Sullivan is a Vancouver-based journalist and owner of Sullivan Media Consulting.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Word on the street: Would Michael Ignatieff make a better prime minister than Stephen Harper?

Mary Woldemichael
age 24, Toronto

A: Anybody would be better than Stephen Harper ... nothing is being done.

Robert Fleming
age 66, Toronto

A: Ignatieff. I believe the Liberals are more suited to the needs of Canada than the Conservatives right now.

Alexandra Ma
age 17, Toronto

A: (Ignatieff). Mainly because I don't like Stephen Harper's view on things and the direction he's leading our country.

Craig Davison
age 38, Ottawa

A: My issue with Ignatieff is that I don't consider him Canadian. ... It seems like he's come back with the sole objective of meeting some political desire of his.

Laura Fitzpatrick
age 24, Bedford, N.S.

A: I don't know a lot about him, but anything is better than Harper. I am not for the Conservatives.

Fabienne Chery
age 20, Calgary

A: Michael who? Whoever he is he can't be worse than Harper. (Harper) wasn't very bright right after the last election.

Letters

Student seeks help in getting guitar back

On Dec. 10, I was meeting my uncle, who was taking me to a rehearsal.

I slid my guitar in its black case and slammed the door shut of his wood-panelled station wagon. Unfortunately, the door didn't close properly.

As we made a left turn onto the Bloor Viaduct, the car door swung open and out flew my guitar. We pulled the car over and I raced out in hopes of grabbing my guitar. The guitar was nowhere to be seen. Then I remembered a lone car behind us. The only explanation I could muster was they had picked it up while we were pulling over.

I am a music major at York University. The guitar that was taken was the first guitar I learned to play on. It has carried me through school and when I graduate it would have been my tool for making a living.

I remain hopeful that maybe, in the holiday spirit, the person who took it will turn it in to the police and I will get to play it once again.

MICHAEL WALTHER, TORONTO

Christmas not usually known for machine-guns

I'm writing about the Dec. 16 photo featuring Santa Claus and a U.S. soldier.

I found this image of a soldier sitting on Santa's lap with a rifle a bit disturbing and inappropriate.

It was disappointing to see Metro include such a photo because we don't usually associate Christmas with machine-guns.

MARIA KASTELLI, THORNHILL

Quebec taken to task over naming of tree

Shame on the Liberals in Quebec to entertain such petty issues (Christmas tree or holiday tree) when the country is in recession.

I come from a country where there are only four per cent Christians, yet we never thought of changing the name of the Christmas season to holiday season or Christmas tree to holiday tree.

One need not compromise or change their religious values to accommodate people of other religions. Calling a Christmas tree a holiday tree is very offending.

BINDU MATHEW, TORONTO

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Paraguayan farmers hold tractor protest against militant labourers
Paraguayan farmers drove 15,000 tractors onto rural highways yesterday to demand the government protect them from militant labourers seeking land who have burned farm equipment, buildings and crops to pressure the government to hand out land to the poor. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Business

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EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

U.S. Fed slashes key rate

Central bank foresees weak economy 'for some time'

The U.S. Federal Reserve has cut its target for a key interest rate to the lowest level on record and pledged to use "all available tools" to combat a financial crisis and prolonged recession.

The central bank said yesterday it has reduced its target for the federal funds rate, the interest that banks charge each other on short-term loans, to a range of zero to 0.25 per cent.

That is down from the one per cent target rate in effect since the last meeting in October. Many analysts had expected the Fed to make a smaller cut to 0.5 per cent.

Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke and his colleagues also pledged to use "all available tools" as they struggle to contain a financial crisis that is the worst since the 1930s and a recession that is already the longest in a quarter-century.

The Fed made clear that it intends to keep the funds rate at extremely low levels. It said it plans to use unconventional methods to flood the banking system with credit and drive interest rates lower.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lowest

- The Fed has never pushed its target for the federal funds rate as low as zero to 0.25 per cent. The lowest target rate before this was one per cent, seen only once before in the past half-century.

Forestry sector eyes Ottawa aid

LUMBER The forestry industry is asking Ottawa and the provinces to boost corporate credit, relax employment insurance rules and allow more mergers in the lumber and paper sector to prevent job losses at mill towns across the country. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sun Media to lay off 600 employees

NEWSPAPERS Sun Media Corp. announced yesterday it is laying off about 600 full-time employees, including 27 editorial staff (16 of them full-time) at the Toronto Sun. Most of the layoffs will take effect before the new year.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Business in brief

ERIC RISBERG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Siphonista Holly Anderson stirs a pot of siphon coffee at Blue Bottle Cafe in San Francisco yesterday. The halogen-powered siphon bar from Japan makes $6 US a cup coffees with flavours that change as the temperature changes.

TELUS Telecom giant Telus Corp. is aiming for 10 per cent profit growth in 2009 and will boost capital spending by 12 per cent to help it tap into opportunities in Canada's burgeoning wireless market.

LOONIE The Canadian dollar surged yesterday as sentiment toward the U.S. dollar darkened. The loonie jumped as much as 2.25 cents and closed with a gain of 2.02 cents at 83.21 cents US, its highest level since Nov. 10.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

More office space vacant in Toronto area

EMPTY Toronto area office vacancies rose modestly to close out the fourth quarter, but analysts expect more empty cubicles in 2009 as layoffs and cost cutting hit the financial services sector and the downtown economy.

Vacancy rates hit 4.9 per cent in the fourth quarter, up from 4.7 per cent in the third quarter in a report by CB Richard Ellis released yesterday. Rents for top quality buildings also fell as a result, from $25.37 per square foot in the third quarter to $24.74 in the fourth.

John O'Bryan, vice chair of CB Richard Ellis, says the two markets most likely to see large increases of available space are Toronto and Calgary, since both cities are seeing "substantial office building construction."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Board urges more spending

DEFICIT The federal government should pump $10 billion to $13 billion in additional spending into the flagging economy in 2009 to help pull the country out of a steep downturn, even though it could help push a deficit to $20 billion or more, the Conference Board of Canada says.

In a report titled Fixing the Recession: Policy Guidance for Canadian Leaders, the Ottawa-based think-tank urged spending on programs that support unemployed workers, with enhanced coverage and longer benefits in provinces like Ontario.

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Manning brothers going to Pro Bowl

Peyton and Eli Manning were voted to the Pro Bowl yesterday, the first time quarterback-playing brothers have been chosen for the same all-star game. The New York Jets led all teams with seven selections, including Brett Favre, who will be in his 10th Pro Bowl. There will be six each from the Giants, Vikings and Titans in the game, to be played Feb. 8 in Honolulu. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports

Harrington PGA player of the year

Padraig Harrington, left, was voted the PGA Tour's player of the year by his peers yesterday, becoming the first European player to win the award since it began in 1990. Harrington's only two wins this year were majors — the British Open and PGA Championship — making him the first European to win successive majors in the same season, and joining Tiger Woods as the only player to achieve that feat in the last 20 years. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Bettman offended by comments

NHL In his strongest comments yet on Sean Avery, NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said the player's comments offended him as a parent. Speaking at a luncheon in Edmonton, Bettman said of Avery's remarks: "To be perfectly honest I wouldn't want to have to explain to my 12-year-old daughter what he said." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Gill to stay at Buffalo after all

NCAA FOOTBALL University at Buffalo head football coach Turner Gill is staying put for another season after receiving a one-year contract extension yesterday. Gill's UB Bulls will face Connecticut in the International Bowl in Toronto on Jan. 3. On Monday, former NBA star Charles Barkley criticized Auburn University for passing over Gill for its head coaching opening, alluding to racism.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Three straight for Leafs

NHL RESULT

Devils 2 **Leafs** 3 (SO)

VS

THE CANADIAN PRESS/FRANK GUNN

Nik Antropov celebrates his second-period goal against the Devils last night. The Leafs won 3-2 in a shootout.

With one swift move, Jason Blake gave Toronto Maple Leaf fans a different kind of shootout memory.

The winger scored the shootout winner with a spinaround deke last night as the Maple Leafs pulled out a 3-2 victory over the New Jersey Devils.

Nik Antropov and Jeremy Williams scored in regulation for the Maple Leafs (12-12-6), who have won three straight games for the first time this season.

The Maple Leafs have consistently struggled in the shootout since it was introduced in 2005 but Blake's highlight goal delivered a rare win in the tiebreaker. That would not have been possible without goaltender Vesa Toskala, who stopped Travis Zajac on a clear breakaway in the final seconds of overtime.

In the third, a Tomas Kaberle giveaway in the final minute of regulation gave Zach Parise an open lane to the goal, but Toskala stopped his wrist shot. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bertuzzi, Moore meet

Todd Bertuzzi and Steve Moore met across a table Monday in Toronto as part of a court-ordered mediation in a $38-million lawsuit Moore filed after Bertuzzi grabbed him from behind, punched him in the head and landed on top of him during a 2004 NHL game.

Moore, who was a member of the Colorado Avalanche at the time, suffered three fractured vertebrae in his neck and a concussion and hasn't played hockey since. "I think he's probably doing as well as to be expected under the circumstances," Toronto lawyer Tim Danson said of his client, Moore, yesterday. "He still has to deal with the loss of his dream and that's a hard thing to come to grips with."

Bertuzzi's former coach Marc Crawford (then bench boss of the Vancouver Canucks for whom Bertuzzi played in 2004) and lawyers for all parties were also present Monday's. "All I can say is the mediation has taken place and it has concluded," the lawyer said.

Bertuzzi, the Canucks and the club's parent company are named as defendants in the suit filed by Moore and his family and which is seeking lost income and damages. Bertuzzi has said in legal documents that Crawford should be held responsible for any damages awarded to Moore. Crawford has claimed in other court documents that Bertuzzi disobeyed instructions to leave the ice in Vancouver before Moore was attacked.

Bertuzzi

Bertuzzi was charged with assault in June 2004 after a four-month investigation. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to probation and community service. He also was suspended from playing the final 13 regular-season games of the 2003-04 season and the playoffs.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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NAM Y. HUH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A 53-foot NHL refrigeration trailer arrives yesterday on Waveland Avenue behind Wrigley Field in Chicago. The trailer will be used to make the ice for the highly anticipated outdoor NHL game on New Year's Day between the Red Wings and Blackhawks.

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Pierce to test injured knee
Boston's Paul Pierce plans to test his left knee before the Celtics game in Atlanta tonight. Pierce was helped off the court with 31 seconds left in Boston's victory over the Utah Jazz Monday night. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Trying to rebound to respectability

Extensions for Canada Basketball coaches – contingent on performance

The coaches of the national men's and women's basketball teams have been put on notice — win or it's time to move on.

Leo Rautins and Allison McNeil have been given contract extensions — and some high-powered help from eras when the national teams were fixtures at the top international competitions — but only with the proviso that they get their teams to the 2010 world championships.

"Initially, that's difficult for a coach to accept but as we walked through the potential of the new structure ... both were enthusiastic," Canada Basketball CEO Wayne Parrish said yesterday.

The men's team hasn't been at a significant international event since the 2002 world championship and the women were 10th at the 2006 worlds, but have missed the last two Olympics.

Both programs face FIBA Americas qualification tournaments next summer with dates and sites still to be determined.

"There was a time when it was consistent that we were in the top five or six teams in the world"
Jay Triano

Rautins and McNeil will have a new group to bounce ideas off — and take advice from — as Canada Basketball has established a "council of excellence" that Parrish likened to a group of village elders.

The nine-member panel includes Raptors senior VP Maurizio Gherardini and a host of names from Canadian basketball history.

Three former men's team coaches — including Raptors coach Jay Triano — are included, as well as former women's team coaches Kathy Shields, Don McRae and Sylvia Sweeney, once one of the top players in the world. Two-time NBA MVP Steve Nash joins the council as an "honourary member."

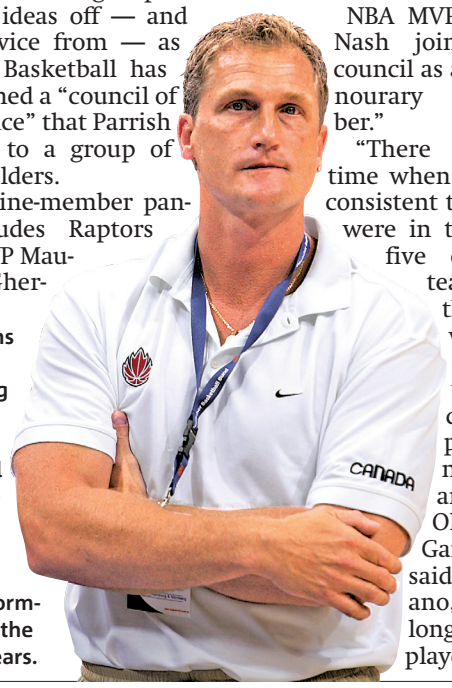
"There was a time when it was consistent that we were in the top five or six teams in the world at world championships and Olympic Games," said Triano, a longtime player and coach for Canada.

"It would be a dream come true to see us as a nation get back to that level again."

"To say that our basketball community in our country has been splintered is an understatement," said Rautins.

"To be able to put this council together and bring back people that have been part of the program, very major people in basketball in this country, is huge."

Canada Basketball has set a goal of being top 10 in the world by 2012 and top eight by 2016 — a sizable leap considering the men's and women's teams failed to earn a berth at the 2008 Olympics.



Leo Rautins blames a splintering in the Canadian basketball community for the national program's poor performance over the past six years.

Tonight

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Ibanez deal finalized in Philly

Free-agent outfielder Raul Ibanez and the Philadelphia Phillies have finalized their US$31.5 million, three-year contract. The deal, agreed to on Friday, was subject to a physical and was announced yesterday. Ibanez will take over in left from Pat Burrell, who became a free agent. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Brydon un-clutters

By removing the clutter from her mind, veteran racer Emily Brydon has been able to focus on skiing and think about a possible podium finish at the 2010 Winter Olympics.

Brydon returns to a comfort zone this week with a World Cup stop at St. Moritz, Switzerland, where she won her first career race last February with a victory in the super-giant slalom. Three of Brydon's seven World Cup podium finishes have come at St. Moritz.

The Fernie, B.C., native was second in a super-G there in 2007 and earned her first World Cup podium finish at the Swiss resort in 2000 when she was third in a downhill.

"I feel really comfortable here," the 28-year-old said. "I think a lot of courses suit different people. This course has always suited me. I just feel really comfortable when I'm here. I don't have to stress. It just seems easy."

By reaching the podium three times in 2007-08 Brydon enjoyed her best World Cup season since joining the national ski team in 1997. Over the summer she worked at not only becoming physically stronger but mentally tougher.

Her new, relaxed, attitude showed at the opening World Cup speed events at Lake Louise, Alta., earlier this month. She finished seventh in the downhill and sixth in the super-G, two very respectable results on a hill that had brought her to tears in the past.

"I've had the same sports psychologist for eight years but it's taken seven and half to get through my thick head," she joked at the time. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sports in brief

CFL The Toronto Argonauts re-signed defensive end Claude Harriott yesterday. Harriott appeared recorded 20 tackles, two sacks and a forced fumble in seven games in 2008.

CFL The Hamilton Tiger-Cats named Khari Jones quarterbacks coach yesterday. Jones was CFL MVP in 2001 with Winnipeg.

FOOTBALL Michael Vick's bankruptcy lawyer says the former NFL star could be moved from a federal prison in Kansas to a halfway house in Virginia by late January. Vick is serving 23 months for bankrolling a dogfighting ring. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SCOREBOARD

NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

TORONTO 3 New Jersey 2 (SO)
Carolina 3 Montreal 2
Philadelphia 5 Colorado 2
Washington 5 N.Y. Islanders 4 (OT)
Atlanta 4 Ottawa 1
Calgary at St. Louis
Phoenix at Dallas
Chicago at Edmonton
N.Y. Rangers at Anaheim

NBA

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Charlotte 110 Chicago 101 (OT)
New Orleans at Memphis
L.A. Clippers at Oklahoma City
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Sacramento at Portland
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Automotive

A METRO JOINT VENTURE WITH: carguide magazine.com

EDITOR: KUMAR SAHA, KUMAR.SAHA@METRONEWS.CA

MINI E: The future's electric

Green car demonstrates the power of plug-ins at L.A. Auto Show

JIM ROBINSON
for Metro Canada

The MINI E is an all-electric two seater that has a range of about 150-plus miles with a top of speed of about 150 km/h.

The MINI stand at the Los Angeles Auto Show is one of the last places I expected to find one of the biggest green car stories of the year, but that's what the MINI E is now.

While the Chevy Volt is still months, and perhaps now years away, BMW, which owns MINI, presented the electrically powered MINI E to the global media for the first time in Los Angeles.

Not merely a concept car, 500 MINI E vehicles will be shipped to California, New York and New Jersey for testing with private and corporate customers.

MINI had a veritable fleet of them available for test drives and it proved eye opening, especially the acceleration which would leave many performance cars in the dust.

BMW is on record as stating it plans to be in series production in the mid-term of all-electric vehicles, starting with the MINI E, as part of the company's "Number One" strategy.

The MINI E's electric drive produces a peak power of 204 hp and 162 lb/ft of torque that is routed to the front wheels through a single-stage helical gearbox.

On the street, the MINI E goes from 0-100 km/h in 8.5 seconds with an electronically limited top speed of 152 km/h.

Range is subjective but with 58 per cent power in the battery, I was told that was good for about 100 miles which I assume meant in-town, not highway.

The MINI E is based on the current hatchback model but will be offered only as a two-seater because the massive lithium-ion battery pack takes up the entire back seat and most of the rear cargo space leaving room for a small carry-on bag or two.

The lithium-ion storage unit has a maximum capacity of 35 kilowatt hours (kWh) and transmits energy to the electric motor as direct current at a nominal 380 volts. The rechargeable battery is made up of 5,088 cells grouped into 48 modules. These modules are packaged into three battery elements that are compactly arranged inside the MINI E.

A car like this in the city makes a believer in an electric future out of anyone.

According to the people I spoke with, a full recharge draws a maximum of 28-kilowatt hours of electricity from the grid. Roughly speaking, a kilowatt-hour translates into 5.4 miles for a total of about 150-plus miles depending on your driving habits.

Starting is basically the same as the MINI with an electronic key fob that is inserted into a slot on the dash and then a starter button is pushed.

There is no sound at startup. Pull the transmission mounted shifter back to Drive and you're ready to go, but don't hit the accelerator too hard because the MINI E takes off like a rocket. With 204 hp, it is about the same at the turbocharged MINI Cooper S but without any noise.

Every time the driver lifts off the accelerator pedal, the electric motor acts as a generator. This results in braking force, and the power recovered from the kinetic energy is fed back to the battery.

This interaction ensures a comfortable and smooth driving experience. In city traffic, some 75 per cent of all deceleration can be done without the brakes. Making substantial use of this energy regeneration feature extends the car's range by up to 20 per cent.

Regenerative braking feels like a parachute being popped open. And each time you lift, the brake lights come on to warn drivers behind you because the deceleration is so abrupt. You can get around it by left foot braking but that seriously lessens range because the whole system depends on as much regenerative power as possible.

A car like this in the city makes a believer in an electric future out of anyone. But Los Angeles is one thing and Canada is another.

How it would perform in the winter with the heater and lights on would be an issue, as anyone with electric heat at home will tell you.

But the great thing about the MINI E, and the "green" cars at the Los Angeles Auto Show, is that something is being done and there is a future for the automobile.

And it seems to be dawning on a lot of us who have covered the auto industry for years that electric is emerging as the best solution and it's cars like the MINI E that are leading the way.

The MINI signature central gauge includes an LED display indicating power consumption in red and power recuperation in green.

MINI E

Type: Luxury electric two-seater
Price: Not available
HP: 204

Highlights

- All electric
- Regenerative braking
- Smooth ride

Phantom of the Opera star and singer Emmy Rossum is shown refueling a Mercedes-Benz BlueTEC.

Mercedes BlueTEC a hit with celebrities

CLEAN CAR When Academy Award nominee Naomi Watts celebrated her 40th birthday in Los Angeles recently, her partner Liev Schreiber (X-Men, The Manchurian Candidate) surprised her with a spectacular present: a Mercedes-Benz ML320 BlueTEC.

Liev and Naomi are among the many actors and musicians to discover the exceptional performance and efficiency of Mercedes-Benz BlueTEC, the world's cleanest, state-of-the-art diesel technology.

In addition to Liev Schreiber and Naomi Watts, fellow BlueTEC clean diesel drivers from motion pictures and television include Desperate Housewives star Kyle McLaughlin, Sex and the City siren Kim Cattrall, Academy Award nominee and Golden Globe Winner Gary Oldman, and Phantom of the Opera star and singer Emmy Rossum.

"My ML320 BlueTEC has all the power and luxury you'd expect of a Mercedes-Benz, plus the efficiency and low environmental impact of an economy or even hybrid vehicle," says Emmy Rossum. "BlueTEC really is the best of both worlds."

Starring in...

- BlueTEC has also starred in some of the hottest television shows this season, including 90210, The Amazing Race, Privileged, Starter Wife, and The Tonight Show with Jay Leno.

Seven-time Grammy winning artist Alanis Morissette chose the fuel-efficient Mercedes-Benz BlueTEC for the video of Underneath, the first single and video from her 2008 album, Flavors of Entanglement.

"Making green choices on a local level is important in creating global change," says Morissette. "I'm glad that Mercedes-Benz has introduced a great option with BlueTEC."

It's a buyer's market in '09

AutoPilot

Michael Goetz

Veteran auto journalist

Well, good day. The nice people at Metro have offered me this perch so I might pontificate on automotive matters on a weekly basis.

I'll start with a warning: I sometimes get over-excited by car stuff and could spray spittle while I talk. If that happens, you might want to move back a bit.

Actually I won't really be pontificating (too much), as I hate being preached to as the next guy. I'm just going to throw out some news, views, trends, ideas, and stories your way, to contribute to the ongoing dialogue people just can't stop having about vehicles, car culture, and driving. My fervent wish is that one day it might be thought of as a good bottle of 5W30 synthetic — car talk lubrication you could count on.

And the topic for today is 2009.

Don't know if you've noticed, but there's this thing called the "Global Economic Crisis" and 2009 just might be the year the North American auto industry goes to hell in a hybrid handbasket. But for anybody contemplating a vehicle purchase, 2009 is shaping up really, really nicely.

For one thing, all the automakers are ready to deal. The usual suspects will continue to discount, but they have been joined by brands like Toyota and BMW, who were previously thought to have discount-resistant DNA.

"All the automakers are ready to deal. The usual suspects will continue to discount, but they have been joined by brands, like Toyota and BMW, who were previously thought to have discount-resistant DNA."

Honda is probably the next convert, as it didn't match Toyota's recent reductions and suffered the consequences, with poor sales during November and December.

And for all the talk of tight credit, we've yet to see that become a factor on the showroom floor. GM, Ford and Chrysler will no longer use low monthly leasing rates to drive sales, because, well, because it almost killed them (through a combination of overly optimistic resale values and getting saddled with gangly vehicles that were a tough sell when crude was more than 100 bucks a barrel).

But interest rates are still way low, and most automakers offer very attractive financing deals. Be cognizant, however, that some of these numbers are possible because the term of the loan has been pushed to five, six, or seven years.

Of course, the main attraction is the cars, and there is an unusually large number of intriguing new products and technologies to watch, and possibly secure for your driveway, in 2009.

This product expansion has been brought on by the push for global cars and green cars, low-sulphur diesel finally being available at North American pumps, and sheer panic on the part of the world's automakers. (Ever notice how wide awake you are after you've had a sphincter moment?)

We'll look more closely at those automotive trends, and possibly a few more bodily functions, in future instalments of Auto Pilot.

Michael Goetz has been writing about cars and editing automotive publications for more than 20 years. He lives in Toronto with his family and a neglected 1967 Jaguar E-type.

Odometer fraud on the rise in U.S.

RESEARCH Digital odometer fraud is growing at an alarming rate. New research results from U.S.-based Carfax show that the number of cars with rolled back odometers has increased 57 per cent in the U.S. over the last four years. According to the U.S. government, more than 450,000 cases of odometer rollbacks are reported annually, costing consumers more than $1 billion. Car buyers should remember some helpful tips to avoid buying a rolled back car:

- Demand a vehicle history report from the seller.
- Examine the wear on the pedals, steering wheel, floor mats, etc., to make sure they are consistent with the mileage reading.
- Have a trusted mechanic check the car.

Audi strikes sports car gold with R8

Audi is sending shockwaves through the sports car establishment yet again with the new R8 V10, a 10-cylinder, 525-hp, 196 mph evolution of the quattro four-wheel-driven sports car.

The new 5.2-litre FSI V10 gasoline engine mounted longitudinally directly behind the cockpit is almost identical in construction to the unit powering the recently announced R8 LMS that will race at customer level in the GT3 class.

It contributes only 31 kg more to the overall weight of the all-aluminum-bodied R8 than the existing V8, taking it to 1,620 kg, and making possible an impressive power-to-weight ratio of 324 hp per ton.

The direct injection engine rockets the R8 through the 62 mph barrier in just 3.9 seconds as it revs freely to its 8,700 rpm limit in each of its six ratios.

When linked to the R tronic transmission it can reach 124 mph in only 12 seconds, and in the right conditions can maintain its breathtaking momentum all the way to 196 mph, an unprecedented high for a road-going Audi.

By mounting the 10-cylinder unit as close as possible to the centre of the R8, Audi engineers have achieved near perfect 44 per cent front/56 per cent rear weight distribution for optimum handling balance.

Dry sump engine lubrication, an element specifically derived from racing, also furthers this aim by enabling the V10 to be mounted as close to the road as possible to lower the centre of gravity.

The Audi magnetic ride dampers swap conventional fluid for a magnetorheological solution containing minute magnetic particles that can be influenced by an electromagnetic field. The system constantly monitors road conditions and driving style and reacts accordingly.

Punching out 525 hp and capable of speeds up to 198 mph, the Audi R8 is now available with a 5.2-litre V10 engine.

Embellishments

- The list of subtle embellishments to the taut, emotive body of the R8 V10 also includes a high gloss finish for the grille and front air intakes, more pronounced side sills, wider side cooling vents within the contrasting sideblade, high gloss rear air outlets, oval exhaust tailpipes and a new rear diffuser.

Small cars getting safer: Insurance industry

Small cars, which have become more popular with the fluctuation in gas prices, are becoming better equipped to protect motorists in serious crashes, according to tests by the insurance industry.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety gave top scores on front-end crash tests for several 2009 small cars released today. Three vehicles — the Pontiac Vibe and Toyota Matrix, which share the same underpinnings and are considered corporate twins, and the Suzuki SX4 — also received top scores in side protection.

Only one vehicle tested, the 2009 Chrysler PT Cruiser, received the lowest mark of poor in side protection and rear protection.

Two other 2009 small cars, the Ford Focus and the Chevrolet HHR, got top marks in front-end tests and received the second-highest score of acceptable in side protection.

"Automakers have made big improvements to small cars to better protect people in frontal crashes," said Joe Nolan, an Institute senior vice-president.

Nolan noted that 11 of the 21 current small cars rated by the Insurance Institute earned top scores in side protection. Only two years ago, he said, three of 19 vehicle models earned the top score.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

VW showcases new Golf Plus at auto show

ITALY Volkswagen unveiled the second generation Golf Plus at the recent Bologna Motor Show in Italy.

The updated design of the new Golf Plus forges a link to the body style of the sixth generation Golf hatchback and gives a distinctive and dynamic appearance.

The front is dominated by the horizontally aligned band of the radiator grille with two high-gloss black crossbars and an integrated Volkswagen roundel, between revised headlights.

Exterior styling revisions continue with a slightly lower profile than the previous generation and with newly designed integrated roof rails.

At the rear, the new Golf Plus has a fully colour-coded redesigned bumper and revised cherry red rear lights incorporating LED technology.

The exterior styling modifications are complemented by a range of new wheel and tire options, including 18-inch Bilbao alloy wheels from Volkswagen Individual.

Engines are still to be confirmed but a range of advanced gasoline and diesels add further refinement to the revised model, with improved levels of fuel economy and reduced emissions.

Both engine models are linked to either a five- or six-speed manual or a six- or seven-speed DSG gearbox.

VW showed the Golf Plus at a recent auto show. The new model features exterior modifications and a range of wheels and tire choices.

Automotive in brief

HYBRID The all-new 2009 Honda Insight hybrid will make its world debut in January at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit. The five-passenger, five-door Insight is expected to be the most affordable hybrid car available when it goes on sale in the spring of 2009. The Insight is expected to have annual global sales of 200,000 units per year and will utilize a new interactive, driver-focused fuel economy enhancement technology named the Ecological Drive Assist System (Eco Assist).

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Small car, big ideas

Yaris lives up to Toyota's economical reputation

LORNE DRURY
for Metro Canada

2009 Toyota Yaris

Type: Subcompact
Price: $13,210 hatchback, $13,945 sedan
Engine: 1.5L four-cylinder
HP: 106

Highlights

- Fuel efficient
- Seats five
- Quick and responsive

The 2009 Toyota Yaris provides outstanding fuel economy with a starting price of $13,945 for the four-door sedan and $13,210 for the hatchback model.

Toyota has built its reputation on selling high-quality, fuel-efficient, economical vehicles.

One of the most economical and popular choices in the Toyota lineup is the Yaris, which comes in both hatchback and sedan styles.

Starting at about $13,210 for the hatchback and $13,945 for the sedan, Yaris is a surprisingly roomy subcompact that gets great fuel economy and provides a lot more amenities than you'd expect for the starting price.

Power is supplied by a 106-hp, 1.5-litre DOHC four-cylinder engine, mated with either a five-speed manual or a four-speed automatic transmission. While gasoline prices are back to reasonable levels as this is written, there's no telling where they'll be at this time next year, so gas misers like the Yaris are becoming more popular by the day.

Transport Canada fuel consumption ratings list the 2009 Toyota Yaris sedan with automatic at 7.0L/100 km (40 mpg) city and 5.7L/100 km (50 mpg) highway.

For 2009, the Yaris has been refreshed somewhat with an enhanced front grille design and upgrade packages.

"For many of us, the Yaris is the best of both worlds: A small car that's easy on fuel and Canadian wallets, yet fully capable of moving five adults or a trunk packed with luggage when the need arises," says Warren Orton, director at Toyota Canada.

"Small car" are the key words here, although you wouldn't know it from inside the cabin. You can fit five people in the Yaris, but the back seat is really more suited to children.

I found the front seat legroom more than adequate, but the seats themselves could do with a bit more padding. A long road trip might be a bit hard.

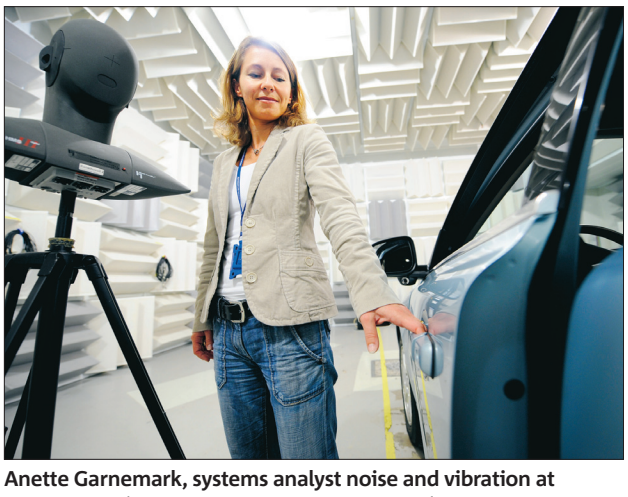
One oddity in the Yaris is the positioning of the instrument cluster on the centre of the dashboard. I found it distracting always having to look right to check your speed.

Otherwise, the cabin is better than one might expect in an entry-level subcompact.

Ride and handling is good in the Yaris, which features quick and responsive electric rack and pinion power steering. Even on the roughest of roads, the Yaris soaks up the bumps quite nicely. Acceleration is adequate to get you up to speed in merging traffic and when overtaking slower moving vehicles.

All in all, the Yaris is a solid commuter that is fuel-efficient and family-friendly.

The instrument cluster on the 2009 Toyota Yaris sits directly above the centre stack, which features easy-to-use knobs and buttons.


Anette Garnemark, systems analyst noise and vibration at Volvo's NVH (Noise, Vibration and Harshness) Centre, creates the perfect door closing sound.

Soundsmiths hit the right notes with cars

EMMA E FORREST
Metro World News

Think of the noises a car makes: The reassuring thud of a solid door shutting, the thrilling rumble of a V12 engine — all give you signals about the car's qualities.

These noises aren't intrinsic, they're all created by fine tuning and plenty of padding, without which your car would sound like a pair of maracas.

"Almost all the sounds you work on in the car are adjustable," explains Anette Garnemark, systems analyst at Volvo's NVH (Noise, Vibration and Harshness) Centre, where they tweak sounds from the road, wind, engine and car components, reducing "irritating" noises and enhancing ones that "inform" and "impress."

The noise a closing door makes is particularly crucial, as it's the driver's first contact with the car.

Volvo's doors are designed to sound "reliable and premium," says Garnemark. The sound is muffled without echos, thanks to optimized lock and damping material.

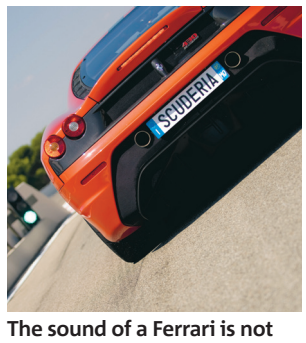
"Designing the sound isn't that different from composing a piece of music."
Roberto Fedeli, Ferrari

The engine note is also key. Fiat has a team that tunes your 1.4 litre to sound more like a Ferrari, as in the new 500 Sport. Over at Ferrari each new model gets its own symphony.

"There is a very clearly defined design behind the noise every Ferrari makes," explains the Italian supercar brand's technical director, Roberto Fedeli.

"Designing the sound isn't that different from composing a piece of music. There's no mistaking Carlos Santana's sound when he plays guitar, even though it's still different every time. The same has to be true of a Ferrari engine."

The bespoke engine sound is created by working on the intake manifolds, but first they have to decide what each model should sound like. "It's a subjective process involving identifying sensations and feelings that make up a signature aspect of the new car," says Fedeli.



The sound of a Ferrari is not just a coincidence.

The sound is produced using musical instruments, mixers, samplers, and composition programs, then signed off by Ferrari's top brass before engineers reproduce it in the engine.

Of course there are legal restrictions — this applies to the horn, the volume in the cabin and even the indicator. In a Ferrari, the noise level never gets above 85db, even at full speed, much to the chagrin of some owners.

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Nero's Golden Palace muddied
Authorities in Rome have closed Nero's Golden Palace to the public after days of heavy rain filled the monument with mud and damaged the electrical system. It's not known when the site, which was built by the Roman emperor Nero in the first century AD, will reopen. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Travel

Sweet seat sale

Coach Canada is reprising its winter seat sale on bus travel between Montreal and Toronto, with some seats available for $1. The sale tickets can now be purchased at *coachcanada.com* for travel dates between Jan. 5 and March 8. The company is offering over 10,000 seats for $1. For conditions and further details, call 1-800-461-7661. THE CANADIAN PRESS

TRAVELDESK@METRONEWS.CA

Catch your breath in the Utah desert

Hiking, scenery and healthy eats help re-energize guests at Red Mountain Spa

ANNE DIMON
for Metro Canada

A couple of minutes into this two-hour hike, I'm thinking I could be in trouble. As someone who likes to consider herself a hardcore hiker, I'm not used to pulling up the tail end of a group. But there I was, notebook in hand, camera slung over my shoulders, slipping and sliding in the thick desert sand in an effort to just to keep up.

It didn't help that the lead guide on this trek — Red Mountain Spa's most challenging day hike — had recently run a 49-kilometre marathon in just 4:19 hours.

Located in the southwestern Utah's Mohavi desert near the town of St. George and about a two-hour drive from the Las Vegas airport, the village-like enclave of Red Mountain Spa is set against a backdrop of dramatic, Navajo sandstone mountain peaks and canyons.

There's a palpable quiet here, as if the craggy, red rock cliffs provided a natural buffer from everyday hustle and bustle. It's an idyllic setting for what's known in the spa world as a "destination spa."

But funnily enough, it's not the spa itself that's the big attraction. It's the hiking. And the food.

When it comes to hiking, you can choose from a menu of about 30 different guided outings at various levels from novice hiker through the advanced Trekker 3, designed for those of us who prefer a little torture out on the trails.

Trekker 3 is the option that has me scrambling to keep up; today's session is more gruelling aerobic workout than an opportunity to gawk at the view, but thankfully, our guide allows us to take a few moments here and there to stop, catch our breath, have a sip of water and take in the dramatic scenery.

I was even more grateful to finally find my mountain legs, and I managed to complete the trek without feeling like the caboose.

Back at the resort, a healthy après-hike buffet awaited our return. And while healthy buffet may read like an oxymoron, at this all-inclusive resort the food is indeed both tasty and nutritious.

It's a good thing that the Red Mountain approach doesn't include starving yourself, because the resort's extensive array of fitness classes — everything from yoga and Pilates workshops to dance and water workouts — tend to give guests quite an appetite.

When not hiking, taking a fitness class or eating, guests can lounge by one of three swimming pools, take a meditative walk around the labyrinth or attend an educational class such as Chinese Medicine, Meditative Rituals and Food & Emotions.

There's a full schedule of optional activities led by instructors, and you can participate as much or as little as you want.

It's no surprise that Red Mountain Spa has won so many awards — it has pretty much everything one needs in a wellness retreat.

For proof of that, you just need to look at the number of return guests. Annette Anderson of Vail, Colo., for instance, has been here 10 times — "I come to re-energize myself and to get in shape with hiking," she says.

Indeed, the hiking options never seem to end. In addition to the Red Mountain hikes there are day trips, for an added cost, to Bryce Canyon and Zion National Park, which boast incredible vistas.

Anne Dimon is a spa and wellness travel writer and editor of traveltowellness.com.

Getting there

- For more information on Red Mountain Spa, visit *redmountainspa.com*
- WestJet offers daily nonstop flights to Las Vegas from Toronto and eight other cities across Canada; *westjet.com*

ANNE DIMON/FOR METRO CANADA

Test your mountain legs and enjoy the scenery on one of Red Mountain Spa's gruelling treks.

Hanukkah celebrations

The Chabad-Lubavitch Jewish organization is planning to host Hanukkah celebrations around the world, including lightings of the world's largest menorahs — both 10 metres tall — in Manhattan and in Washington D.C. See *chabad.org/ChanukahEvents*. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Get on your bike

Defy the economy by staying at hotels that provide bicycles

EMMA E. FORREST
Metro World News

Appealing to those caught up in the credit-crunch craze for saving money, some of the world's hippest big-city hotels are now offering fleets of bicycles for guests to use.

Opt for one of these hotels in the new year and not only will you save your cash and get a fresh perspective on the city, you'll fulfil your resolutions to be healthier and eco-aware in 2009.

The Bowery NYC

In New York, you can pedal around Manhattan on a red Jamis earth cruiser if you stay at The Bowery NYC; *theboweryhotel.com*.

The James

At The James in Chicago, you can ride bikes customized by kooky clothing brand Paul Frank; see *jameshotels.com*.

The Gansevoort South

The Gansevoort South in Miami is offering very cool glow-in-the-dark Puma bikes, perfect for guests planning to hit the city's famous nightspots; *ganse voortsouth.com*.

Element

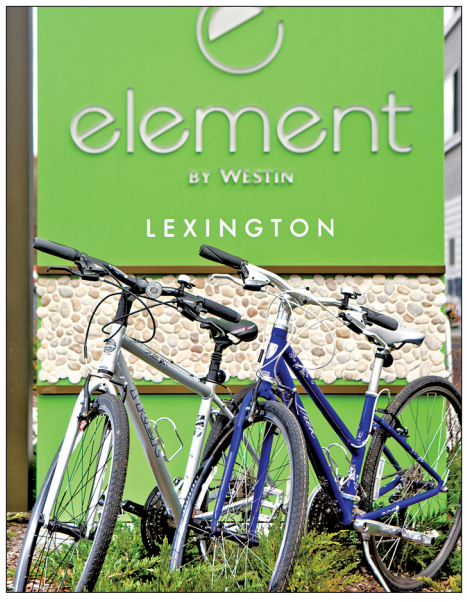
Even hotel mega-chain, Starwood is offering free bikes at its new eco-friendly Element property. Guests can borrow Trek hybrid mountain/city bikes from their first hotel in the Boston suburb of Lexington; *elementHotels.com*.

Hotel du Nord

The intimate and charming Hotel du Nord in Paris is offering its answer to the city's famous Velibpay-per-ride bicycles with a fleet of 10 bikes for guests to ride free of charge; check out *hoteldunord-leparivelo.com*.

Cash-saving tips

- Look for discounts at hotels during their off-peak time of the week. Business hotels offer great deals on weekends, and fancy weekend-break country hotels are often cheaper during the week.
- Avoid peak times in general — flights, hotels and packages are always pricier during school holidays.
- Live like a local. Eat in local cafés rather than touristy restaurants, and you'll enjoy more authentic cuisine as well as save cash. Use a local SIM card so you don't pay extortionate cell-phone rates.
- Watch out for false economies. Your ultra-cheap flight can cost a fortune if you have to take a taxi to or from the airport if you fly or land at crazy times.



Big-city hotels that provide bicycles for guests to use include, clockwise from above left, The James in Chicago; Element, which is Starwood's new eco-friendly chain; The Gansevoort South in Miami and the Hotel du Nord in Paris.

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$149 +taxes & fees $448.00 LONDON Roundtrip Flight Dec. 29 - Jan. 13 VAT, ts	$247 +taxes & fees $242.00 ORLANDO Continental Plaza - room + car 3★ • european plan • 7 nights Jan. 4 NOL, ts	$333 +taxes & fees $205.00 VARADERO Club Los Delfines 3½★ • all inclusive • 7 nights Jan. 4 HOL, cu	$578 +taxes & fees $200.00 HOLGUIN Brisas Costa Verde 4★ • all inclusive • 7 nights Jan. 16 SGX, 5g	$568 +taxes & fees $267.00 PUERTO VALLARTA Palladium Vallarta - sup. room 4½★ • all inclusive • 7 nights Jan. 5 SGX, 5g	$597 +taxes & fees $308.00 PUNTA CANA Catalonia 4★ • all inclusive • 7 nights Jan. 5 NOL, 5g
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Frozen in time
Herculaneum, ignored by many a Pompeii-bound tourist as that other city the volcano Vesuvius "froze" in ancient time, is showing off its glories at an exhibit running through Apr. 13 at National Archeological Museum in Naples. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Getting eyeful at N.Y.C.'s Museum of Sex

This institution brings a whole new meaning to 'too much information'

TheTravelJunkie

JULIA DIMON/FOR METRO CANADA

The Museum of Sex — MoSex, for short — in New York City takes a scholarly approach to its subject.

While Manhattan is home to dozens of cultural museums dedicated to high-brow art, it has only one cultural institution where you can fondle a love doll, watch panda porn and learn about the sexual habits of the honey bee.

The Museum of Sex, which opened in 2002, claims to be the most "stimulating museum in New York." You can find a handful of sex museums scattered across Europe and Asia, but this one favours information rather than just titillation — specifically, it aims to "preserve and present the history, evolution and cultural significance of human sexuality."

Since the Museum of Sex, a.k.a MoSex, is set to spice up its permanent collection, I figured this was a good time to check it out.

The first — and certainly most interesting — of its three galleries contains an exhibit called The Sex Lives of Animals. Strolling amidst photo displays and anatomically correct statues of creatures mid-coitus, I learn that plenty of animals mate for reasons other than procreation. Apparently, they engage in all sorts of acts for pleasure — just two of the more memorable pursuits I learned about involved the West Indian manatee and the Gray whale, both of which indulge in some remarkable group activities.

The exibit also illustrates how prevalent homosexuality is in nature. It's a form of social bonding, affection and courtship that has been documented in over 500 species, including lions, penguins and primates.

I walked past a wall of tapir, ostrich and killer whale genitalia to the next exhibit, called Action: Sex and the Moving Image. This selection of media clips looks at the history of sex on film, from metaphorical movies dating back to the 1930s through burlesque flicks and modern-day pornography.

Surprisingly, the most shocking things I saw were Pamela Anderson and Paris Hilton's explicit sex tapes. With videos like these, it's no wonder that visitors have to be at least 18 years old to enter the museum.

I dragged myself from the den of cinematic sin to the final gallery, a room filled with a mishmash of paraphernalia: squeezable latex love dolls, a nine-foot S&M suspension cage, anime videos, pinup posters and antique vibrators.

I leave the Museum of Sex with the following conclusions: one, human sexuality is complicated; two, our concepts of sex, norms and taboos are constantly changing and three, West Indian manatees are having more sex than I am.

MoSex

- For information on admission fees, hours and discounted tickets visit *museumofsex.com*.

Julia Dimon is co-host of Word Travels, airing on OLN, and editor of thetraveljunkie.ca.

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An explosive New Year's Eve

Robbie Knievel will jump his motorcycle over a manmade erupting volcano in Las Vegas on New Year's Eve. Knievel, the 46-year-old son of the late daredevil Evel Knievel, will jump the iconic volcano at The Mirage hotel-casino; the volcano just underwent $25 million US facelift. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Egyptian antiquities on display at Museum of Civilization

GATINEAU, QUE. A new exhibition at the Canadian Museum of Civilization provides a look at daily life and religious faith in ancient Egypt, featuring a recreated burial tomb and over 200 artifacts ranging from jewelry to human and animal mummies.

Tombs of Eternity: The Afterlife in Ancient Egypt is a showcase for the major collection of Egyptian antiquities held by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Rare and fragile objects on display include sarcophagi, amulets, sculptures, beads, weapons and furniture.

The exhibition runs from through Aug. 16, 2009. THE CANADIAN PRESS

MUSUEM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

This basalt sarcophagus lid is part of the Ancient Egypt exhibit at the Museum of Civilization.

DANGER

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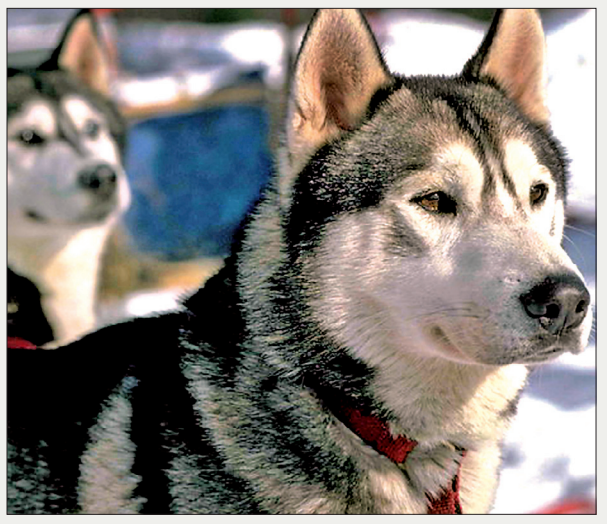

/IMAGEONTARIO.COM

Sled dogs are keen to get going in this photo from the Bancroft Frosty Frolics Dog Sled Races. If you'd like to try your hand at dog sledding, you can sign up for mushing lessons and day trips in Muskoka.

Going to the dogs

• Try travelling by dog sled along Muskoka's trails on a half day or full day trip. Take "mushing" lessons and have a chance to race the dogs in pairs while watching the forest scenery go by. You'll travel two people per sled, pulled by a six-dog team. Trips run everyday and are $150 for a half-day trip and $250 for a full-day trip. Submit a trip registration form online at *adventureseekertours.com*.

Climb a frozen waterfall

• Bundle up in that warm, winter coat and head north of Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., to Batchawana Bay for some guided ice climbing exploration. Refresh your skills then ascend up new virgin icefalls that the North of Superior Climbing Company has been developing. Routes are chosen based on clients' experience. To learn about costs, dates and locations of tours visit *northofsuperiorclimbing.com*.

Ghost walk

• Test your courage with the final Ghost Walks of 2008 on Dec. 20. Sign up for a 90-minute evening guided tour of haunted sites in Hamilton, Ont., such as The Royal Connaught Hotel and The Right House. Or hear about Niagara-on-the-Lake's headless officer in Old Fort Niagara. Admission for adults is $10 and $5 for kids 13 and under. Visit *ghostwalks.com*.

JOSEPHINE LIM/ FOR METRO CANADA

B.C. resort offers Denny Crane package

B.C. Guests checking in to their chalet at Nimmo Bay Resort will find a complimentary copy of a recent episode of Boston Legal.

The resort, located at the foot of Mount Stevens along B.C.'s Great Bear Rainforest coastline, was featured in the episode.

Nimmo Bay is offering a Denny Crane package, which includes a cap similar to the one that Crane (played by William Shatner) wore while fly fishing. See *nimmobay.com/resort*.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Airfares

ORLANDO $24
Travel Jan 11 - Jan 18/ts + taxes & fees $224

Fort Lauderdale $44 — Travel Jan 4 - Jan 15/ts + taxes & fees $225

Cancun $85 — Travel Jan 9 - Jan 16/wg + taxes & fees $277

Jamaica $88 — Travel Jan 11 - Jan 18/5g + taxes & fees $265

London $149 — Travel Dec 29 - Jan 13/ts + taxes & fees $448

Buenos Aires $439 — Travel Feb 11 - Feb 25/ac + taxes & fees $395

Holidays

Las Vegas 3-Star $205 — *Circus Circus* + taxes & fees $230
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare and 4 nights 3-star accom on the Las Vegas Strip. Departs Jan 25/swg/wg.

Montreal Weekend Escape $269 — *Travelodge Centre* taxes & fees included
INCLUDES roundtrip rail from downtown Toronto to downtown Montreal, 3 nights 3-star accom only steps away from Old Montreal. Travel Jan 30/inf/via.

Buenos Aires $799 — *Republica* + taxes & fees $395
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare and 6 nights accom centrally located just by the famous Obelisco. Departs Feb 11/inf/ac. ADD tango show, dinner and dance lessons from $105.

All-inclusive Holidays

Puerto Plata 4-Star $487 — *Bahia Principe San Juan* + taxes & fees $308
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star all-inclusive accom. Departs Jan 15/nol/c6. ADD Santo Domingo city tour from $73.

Varadero 4-Star $487 — *Mercure Playa de Oro* + taxes & fees $210
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star all-inclusive accom. Departs Jan 12/swg/wg.

Cancun 4-Star $597 — *Oasis Palm Beach* + taxes & fees $267
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star all-inclusive accom. Departs Jan 22/nol/5g. ADD horseback riding on the beach from $96.

Cruise Holiday

BAHAMAS CRUISE & STAY $499 — *Monarch of the Seas* + taxes & fees $238
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare to Orlando, 3-night Bahamas cruise with Royal Caribbean visiting Nassau and Coco Cay, 5 nights 3-star accom at the Best Western Lakeside Resort near *Walt Disney World* Resort in Orlando. Departs Jan 16/inf/wg. ADD *Walt Disney World* 5-day *Magic Your Way* Base Ticket from $270.

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Market downturn signals boon for U.S. career colleges
While public colleges in the U.S. are trying to cope with the current economic downturn, American career colleges are seeing gains. According to data from the U.S.-based Career College Association, for-profit colleges have seen enrolment jump by an average of 17 per cent in the last nine economic downturns. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Workology

Centennial College

EDITOR: DOUGLAS DUNLOP, DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

Trades steady on job market

Aviation and aerospace industry worker shortfall pegged at 150,000 by 2017

Job Trends

ROBYN YOUNG
for Metro Canada

The aviation and aerospace maintenance industry in Canada is facing a massive shortage of skilled workers.

By 2017, one expert predicts the field will see a shortage of skilled workers equal to the size of the workforce today — approximately 150,000.

Despite air travel numbers falling during the first half of 2008 because of high fuel costs, the executive-director of the Aviation Maintenance Council says it was a short-lived blip and aviation and aerospace production continues to grow.

"Everybody's projecting somewhere between four- and six-per-cent growth in the industry," said Robert Donald.

The aviation maintenance industry is not alone in its projected shortage.

From trades such as carpentry to electrical technicians to plumbing, Canada is in dire need of skilled employees.

Julien Mayr, an aircraft maintenance engineer for a private, aircraft charter and leasing company, says he's barely felt the impact of the current economic downturn.

While Canada's unemployment rate increased 0.1 percentage points in November after 71,000 workers across the country lost their jobs, Mayr says there never seems to be enough licensed technicians in his field.

He went into aircraft maintenance and repair after completing an undergraduate degree in psychology at the University of Calgary. He couldn't figure out what to do with his BA, and always enjoyed mechanical work.

"The nice thing about the trades is that you're taught to do a specific job," he said. "You have an immediate occupation."

He completed two years of schooling, followed by two years of apprenticeship training in order to get his Aircraft Maintenance Engineer licence.

The Government of Canada plays a central role in ensuring Canada's economy is equipped with a highly skilled workforce, says Jason Bouzanis, spokesman for Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

The Apprenticeship Incentive Grant, for example, is a taxable $1,000 cash grant available to apprentices registered in a Red Seal trade who have completed their first and/or second level of their apprenticeship program on or after January 2007.

As in many trades these days, the money in aircraft maintenance is good and jobs are full time with benefits and sometimes full pension plans.

Donald says licensed technicians can pull in a salary ranging from between $60,000 to $100,000 a year with overtime and benefits.

And there's certainly no concern of losing one's job in this industry, he said.

"I project that young people with the right skills will have their choice of any number of jobs and the competition for those employees will only increase as time goes on."

PHOTO SUBMITTED

Julien Mayr, left, is pictured here with a colleague in Myanmar several years ago in front of one of the aircrafts he was servicing at the time.

Good bets for trades

- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada provides a listing of occupations and their employment prospects over the next several years. The following is a snapshot of some of the trades with a better than average outlook in Ontario:
- Construction managers
- Electricians
- Steamfitters, pipefitters, sprinkler system installers
- Ironworkers
- Carpenters
- Bricklayers
- Concrete finishers
- Heavy equipment mechanics

Store name misidentified

CLARIFICATION In yesterday's Metro the consignment store Around the Block was incorrectly identified in an article headlined: 'Out with the old in with the $'. The store's website is aroundtheblock.com and the owner Warren Hales can be reached at 416-546-1760. To see the correct version of the story visit metronews.ca. Metro regrets the error.

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Declining enrolment at Atlantic universities

According to new data from the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, enrolment at Atlantic universities dropped two per cent between 2006-2007 and 2007-2008. Nova Scotia has seen the biggest decrease in enrolment, down six per cent since 2004-2005. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Severance is more complicated than you thought

With 71,000 Canadian jobs having vanished in the month of November alone, tales of mass restructuring have moved from this column's coverage to the front pages of the news. The question I'm most frequently asked now is, what should employees expect if they lose their job and what can they do to protect themselves. Here are the rules of severance:

- Non-union employees in Canada do not have an entitlement to continued employment. That is, an employer is permitted by law to dismiss, as long as an advance warning known as reasonable notice is provided. The objective is to provide the employee with enough working notice to secure another job before being asked to leave his or her current position. However, instead of providing notice, most companies elect to give severance pay instead. What is most often disputed is the amount of notice or pay that an employee is entitled to.
- In determining the amount of notice or severance pay, the first step is to consider whether or not there is an employment contract. If so, the employee may have agreed to receive a specific amount. As this situation creates an unfavourable scenario for employees who may not have known the consequences of signing such an agreement, courts have historically enforced these contract clauses only in very specific situations.
- Without a specific contractual clause, employees are entitled to reasonable notice or severance pay. Many believe that this amount is based on a formula, such as one month per year of service. They are mistaken. Courts do not follow any defined rules in calculating how much severance to pay to a particular employee. Rather, notice or severance pay is based on how long it ought to take the employee to find a comparable position, having regard to his or her age, tenure, position and the availability of another job.
- Notice or severance pay is not limited to merely an employee's salary. Generally, an employee is entitled to all the non-discretionary payments that he or she earned while employed, such as non-discretionary bonuses, sales commissions, health benefits and even stock options.
- Each province has a set amount of notice or severance pay that employees must receive upon dismissal. However, that amount is only the minimum. The majority of dismissals result in the obligation to pay the greater amount, defined above.

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Daniel A. Lublin is an employment lawyer focusing on the law of dismissal; dan@toronto-employmentlawyer.com.

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GLOBAL INTERNATIONAL

Laurier Brantford halts university centre project
Construction of a university centre at Wilfrid Laurier University's Brantford campus has been put on hold because it's too expensive. In order for the project to go ahead, officials will be exploring options to work within its budget, including reducing the size of the building. METRO NEWS SERVICES

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Come to Canada, go to Centennial

"Sometimes I feel too old to be a student," says Khaled Ferdaus, a modest 50-year-old mechanical engineer from Bangalesh who came to Canada to start a better life for himself and his family.

A father of two university students himself, Ferdaus was born in Bogra, Bangladesh and went to Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology to earn his degree.

"It is the second-oldest engineering university in Bangladesh and one of the top schools in the country," says Ferdaus proudly.

His degree gave him the opportunity to work in manufacturing and the nation's railways, but he felt compelled to further his education with a MBA, which he completed in 1997.

Despite finding consulting work with the World Health Organization, he couldn't shake the feeling that better opportunities lay in far-off Canada. Together with his spouse, son and daughter, they flew to Toronto in 2003 to start their new adventure here.

Like many foreign-trained professionals who arrived before him, Ferdaus had trouble finding work related to his field.

"I would come to job interviews and perform well in them. I would be called back to do a second interview and do well again. Then they would call to say they would love to hire me, but I have no Canadian experience," Ferdaus recounts. "That's how it would always end."

He settled for factory work and retail sales, but they were temporary jobs paying meagre wages. Ferdaus became another under-employed professional working in unfulfilling jobs.

"It's not hard to do those jobs, but you're not using your intellect," observes Ferdaus.

STEPHANIE LAKE PHOTO

Centennial College automation and robotics student Khaled Ferdaus, left, accepts his Desi News Scholarship from publisher G. A. Easwar.

He came to realize that if he's to crack the employment market in Canada, he would have to return to school with the goal of acquiring new credentials familiar to Canadian employers.

After doing some comparative research he selected Toronto's Centennial College. Ferdaus was intent on complementing his engineering degree by studying automation and robotics, a growing specialty in manufacturing and other sectors.

"I talked with college coordinators about their labs, and chose Centennial because it seemed to me it is better equipped to teach in the field," recalls Ferdaus of his quest for the best program.

Centennial recognized his foreign engineering degree, which provided him with enough credits to enter the second year of the college's robotics program right away.

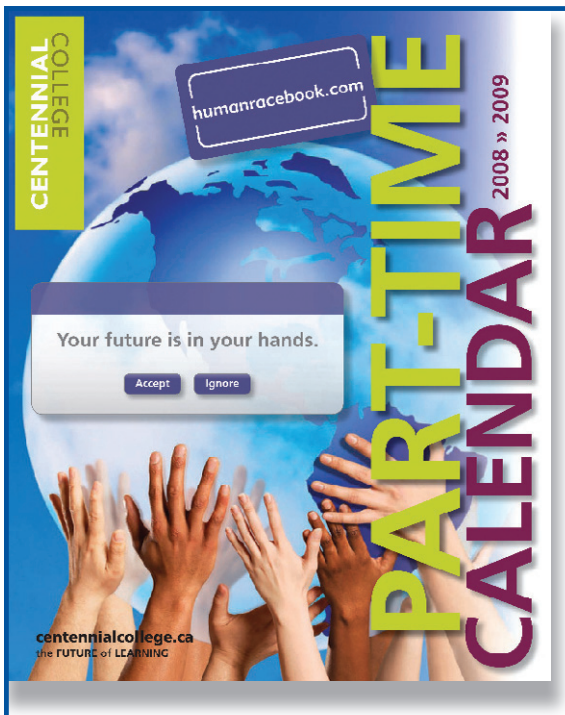
Ferdaus sought the co-op option, which will provide him with up to one year of work experience with a robotics firm in the Greater Toronto Area, an excellent opportunity to sample work in the field and earn some income.

His career choice seems to agree with him. Last month, his outstanding grades earned him the college's Desi News Corporation Scholarship, along with student Moumita Das.

But it hasn't been easy making ends meet. Three members of the Ferdaus family are full-time students. In addition to himself, his son is at York University and his daughter is attending classes at the University of Toronto.

Still, for Ferdaus, his scholarship represents an early and welcome dividend for all the hard work and sacrifices.For more information about Centennial's engineering technology programs, visit centennialcollege.ca/SETAS.

–MARK TOLJAGIC



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the FUTURE of LEARNING

Jack Black visits The Office
Comedian Jack Black is set to guest star in hit show The Office. The actor will appear in an episode slated to air in February, right after the SuperBowl. IMDB.COM

Entertainment

More Will

Actor Will Smith is in talks to reprise two of his most successful recent movie roles in a Hancock sequel and a prequel to I Am Legend. IMDB.COM

Anti-Christmas classics

Take a break from the irritating well-wishing with these fun films

PHIL BROWN
for Metro Canada

As we enter the last shopping week before the most commercial of all holidays, it's getting to be that special time of year when everyone gets a little sick of Christmas.

After all, you can only hear the high pitched squeal of the Chipmunks whining about wanting "a hula hoop" while you claw your way through the riotous mob of mall shoppers so many times before your holiday cheer turns into black bile.

Fortunately a number of filmmakers have developed their own antidotes to the Christmas season. Here are a few films you can watch when a break from all the carolling and irritating well-wishing is needed.

Actor Billy Bob Thornton portrays a mall santa in the anti-Christmas movie Bad Santa.

• **THE REF:** Ted Demme may have died tragically young, but at least he gave us the finest anti-Christmas comedy before he left. Dennis Leary stars as a chain-smoking jewel thief who holds a dysfunctional family hostage on Christmas Eve. More holiday movies should have an emotional climax in which Kevin Spacey tells his mother, "You know what I'm going to get you next Christmas, Mom? A big wooden cross, so that every time you feel unappreciated for your sacrifices, you can climb on up and nail yourself to it."

• **BAD SANTA:** Director Terry Zwigoff says that he and his ghost screenwriters, the Coen brothers, used to describe Bad Santa as "the Christmas movie only three Jews could make." Considering the fact that this film stars a foul-mouthed elf, a woman with a Santa fetish, and a safe-cracking mall Santa who gets drunk and pees his pants on the job, they've got a point.

• **DIE HARD:** It's not commonly discussed, but the movie that made Bruce Willis a star is not only set at Christmas but ends with a rendition of Let It Snow. If there's a better way of ringing in the holidays then watching Willis shoot Alan Rickman with a gun concealed on his back with tape that reads "Seasons Greetings," I haven't found it.

• **GREMLINS:** Joe Dante's mini-monster classic gleefully sends up the holiday with puppet monsters tearing apart a Frank Capra-esque town on Christmas Eve. The scene in which the Gremlins take up caroling and Phoebe Cates' darkly comic monologue about the Christmas her father died while playing Santa can only be fully appreciated at the peak of a yuletide burnout.

• **BRAZIL:** Though not overtly about Christmas, Terry Gilliam's dystopian classic gleefully satirizes every element of 20th century excess; including the holiday season. The movie opens with a family huddled around the Christmas tree when an anti-terrorist swat team bursts through the ceiling and arrests the father at gunpoint. If a scene like that doesn't get you in the holiday spirit, nothing will.

Arcade Fire has new documentary

MUSIC Canadian rock band Arcade Fire is releasing a documentary titled Miroir Noir on DVD and through their website.

The video was shot by a friend of the band, Vincent Morisset, and chronicles their lives during the recording of their 2007 album, Neon Bible, and the subsequent tour.

Their website has a video teaser of the 70-minute film, and a news release suggested a downloadable version of the documentary was to posted online.

April Wine to join music industry hall

MUSIC Canadian rockers April Wine will be inducted into the Canadian Music Industry Hall of Fame next year.

The group will receive the honour, as well as a Lifetime Achievement Award, at the Canadian Radio Music Awards on March 13 in Toronto. The awards are part of the 27th annual Canadian Music Week, which runs March 11 to 14. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Remake of The Crow in the works
Plans for a remake of The Crow have been revealed. Director Stephen Norrington has signed up to write and direct a new version of the 1994 movie, but promises it will be different to helmer Alex Proyas' adaptation of the comic book. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Quaid settles overdose lawsuit

LAWSUIT Documents show Dennis Quaid and his wife have agreed to a a $750,000 settlement with a Los Angeles hospital that gave his newborn twins an overdose of blood thinner.

A petition filed in Los Angeles Superior Court shows the Quaids and Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre have agreed on the parents' damages, but can still pursue claims for their children. The documents state Cedars-Sinai is not admitting wrongdoing as part of the settlement.

Dennis Quaid

Documents show the Quaids sued drug maker Baxter Healthcare Corp. in Illinois over the drug's packaging, but that case has been dismissed.

The petition filed Monday indicates Baxter may also sue Cedars-Sinai, which administered too much Heparin to several patients in November 2007, including Quaids' twins.

Man guilty of leaking songs

LEGAL A man accused of leaking nine unreleased tracks from the Guns N' Roses album Chinese Democracy has pleaded guilty to a federal copyright violation.

Kevin Cogill entered the plea Monday in a Los Angeles courtroom. Prosecutors accused him of leaking the album online on his blog, months before Axl Rose's long-delayed opus arrived on store shelves. A document shows they agreed to recommend probation in exchange for the plea deal.

Cogill admitted he leaked nine of the 14 songs that appeared on the album but has not publicly stated how he received the tracks. His plea agreement requires him to co-operate with investigators.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

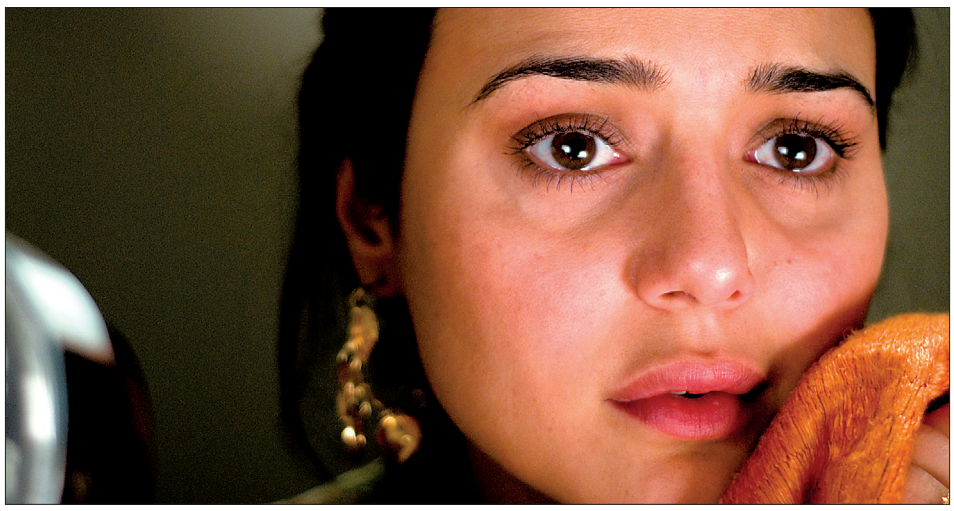
In brief

HONOURED A new music therapy room at a hospital on Florida's Gulf Coast is being named for AC/DC lead singer Brian Johnson. Johnson and other rock stars have supported an effort to buy music equipment and provide music education for children, including those who are patients at Sarasota Memorial Hospital. The deidcation takes place next week.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TIFF picks favourite Canadian films of year

Two aboriginal movies made by Quebec filmmakers, one of which is an Oscar hopeful, have made the Toronto International Film Festival Group's list of the Top 10 Canadian movies of 2008.


Director Deepa Mehta's Heaven on Earth was among the Toronto International Film Festival's Top 10 Canadian movies of 2008.

Benoit Pilon's The Necessities of Life (Ce qu'il faut pour vivre), about an Inuit hunter being treated for tuberculosis near Quebec City, is Canada's submission for a foreign language film Oscar.

And Before Tomorrow, by Marie-Helene Cousineau and Madeline Piujuq Ivalu, is a visually stunning tale of an Inuit woman and her grandson.

The rest of the films on the eighth annual list released Tuesday are "wide-ranging" and represent most parts of the country, says Steve Gravestock, the festival's director of Canadian programming.

"They speak, I think, to the health of the industry in a lot of ways, partly because they're kind of all over the map," he said in an interview.

"You have domestic dramas, you have films with substantial comic elements, you have thrillers or films that play with that kind of genre."

In the realm of domestic drama are Deepa Mehta's Heaven on Earth, about a woman who leaves India for an arranged marriage in Canada, and Rodrigue Jean's Lost Song, about a couple struggling with postpartum depression.

Also touching on domestic issues but with some humour are It's Not Me, I Swear! (C'est pas moi, je le jure!) by Philippe Falardeau and Mommy Is at the Hairdresser's (Maman est chez le coiffeur) by Lea Pool.

Adoration from Atom Egoyan follows a teen as he gets caught up in a lie on the Internet, while Fifty Dead Men Walking by Kari Skogland chronicles a hustler who gets wrapped up in the IRA and British intelligence.

Rounding out the list is The Memories of Angels (La Memoire des anges), Luc Bourdon's look at Montreal movies, and Pontypool, a zombie thriller from Bruce McDonald.

Gravestock said almost half of the filmmakers on the list are female, a trend that had previously been noted at the Toronto film festival in September.

"This really has been a year where I think women have made substantial inroads," he said.

"Women obviously have for a long time formed a key component in a lot of areas in filmmaking, but it's not often the case that they're often given the opportunity to direct or that the films get the response people anticipate."

A panel of filmmakers, critics, programmers or industry professionals chosen by TIFF Group chooses the list every year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Critics' choice

The Toronto Film Critics Association also named its best of 2008 last night. Here are the winners:

- PICTURE: Wendy and Lucy
- PERFORMANCE, MALE: Mickey Rourke, The Wrestler
- PERFORMANCE, FEMALE: Michelle Williams, Wendy and Lucy
- SUPPORTING PERFORMANCE, MALE: Heath Ledger, The Dark Knight
- SUPPORTING PERFORMANCE, FEMALE: Rosemarie DeWitt, Rachel Getting Married
- DIRECTOR: Jonathan Demme, Rachel Getting Married
- SCREENPLAY: Jenny Lumet, Rachel Getting Married
- FIRST FEATURE: Ballast, directed by Lance Hammer
- ANIMATED FEATURE: WALL•E
- FOREIGN-LANGUAGE FILM: Let the Right One In
- DOCUMENTARY FEATURE: Man on Wire

SOURCE: TORONTO FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION

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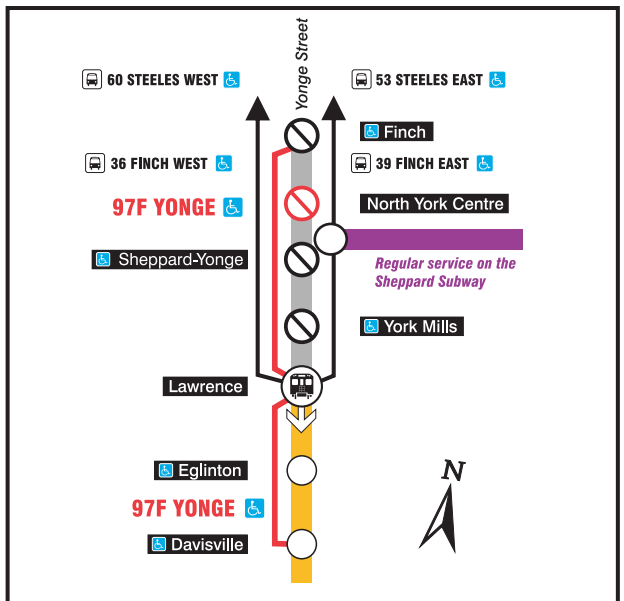

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Regular subway service on Saturdays

Weisz favoured to play Catwoman

Actress Rachel Weisz is reportedly the favourite of movie bosses to take on the role of Catwoman in a sequel to the Batman movie, The Dark Knight. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Wii dominates Canadian video game sales

Canadians are on track to spend more than $2 billion on video games in 2008.

The NPD Group, which tracks the video game industry, reported Monday that 2008 sales in Canada including hardware, software and accessories were $1.6 billion through November — up 36 per cent from the $1.1 billion over the same period a year ago.

Considering that Canadian cash registers rang up $396 million in video game sales in December 2007, the $2-billion mark seems very reachable this year with figures from the holiday rush still to come.

Those totals do not include PC game software.

Sales in the industry have soared in recent years. In 2005, the total amount spent on video games in Canada was $765 million. That figure climbed to $933 million in 2006 (up 22 per cent) and $1.531 billion in 2007 (up 56 per cent).

The Nintendo Wii continues to help drive the market. In November alone, Canadian consumers bought 123,000 Will consoles — up 40 per cent over the same month last year. That's more than the Xbox 360 (74,000 units) and PlayStation 3 (41,000) combined in November 2008.

Gears of War 2 topped November video game sales.

"It's still the dominant force out there," said Matt Tattle of the NPD Group.

The Wii has sold 695,000 units so far in 2008, compared to 343,000 for the Xbox 360 and 326,000 for the PS3.

"For a year, it's seeing some of the best sales we've ever seen for a console," Tattle said.

Nintendo's handheld DS leads in hardware sales with 717,000 units so far this year, already exceeding the 2007 number of 711,000.

Gears of War 2 (Xbox 360) topped the November game sales chart ahead of Call of Duty: World at War (Xbox 360).

The PS3 version of Call of Duty came in at No. 4, sandwiched between Mario Kart and Fit (both Nintendo Wii).

The limited edition version of Gears 2 (Xbox 360) ranked seventh.

The Canadian sales chart featured nine titles for Nintendo (seven for the Wii and two for the DS), six for the Xbox 360 and five for PlayStation (four for PS3 and one for PS2).

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Top games

The most popular game rentals according to Rogers Video for the period ending Dec. 14.

- 1. Gears of War 2 (Xbox 360)
- 2. Call of Duty: World at War (Xbox 360)
- 3. Fallout 3 (Xbox 360)
- 4. The Prince of Persia (Xbox 360)
- 5. Call of Duty: World at War (PlayStation 3)
- 6. The Prince of Persia (PlayStation 3)
- 7. Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe (Xbox 360)
- 8. Left 4 Dead (Xbox 360)
- 9. Fable II (Xbox 360)
- 10. Resistance 2 (PlayStation 3). THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Whoppi's web show
Actress Whoopi Goldberg is creating and will star in a new science fiction mini-series that will be broadcast only online. Stream will debut on Jan. 15 on Fearnet.com. IMDB.COM

No Canadian Idol next year

IntelleVision

Rick McGinnis
rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

AARON LYNETT/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Jully Black performed at Canadian Idol in September.

I'M JUST SAYIN': Yesterday began with an anonymous reader sending me an e-mail asking how I felt, now that my recent prediction — that one major Canadian network would probably always have an edge over its competition as long as it has two big reality franchises in its schedule — was obviously stale-dated, now that said major network was cancelling one of the shows.

After a quick Google and a check through the rest of my inbox, I wrote back and asked just what the hell they were talking about — this would be big news, and there wasn't a sign of it anywhere.

It was true, they replied — cast and crew of the show had been pink-slipped just before the holidays. A further Google revealed the likely source — an item on the Voteforthe worst.com web site, claiming that Canadian Idol was "cancelled, over, kaput, done."

I put a call in to a CTV publicist, who claimed that this was the first he'd heard of it. I asked him to "either confirm or deny" the story, rather relishing using those words as they were meant to be used for the first time in my whole career as a journalist. Wisely, he declined to do either, and said that he'd try to get someone from programming for me to talk to, though he wasn't making any promises.

Another trawl through the web came up empty — no press release from CTV, no brief from the Canadian Press, but just before noon, a new thread had opened up on CTV's own web site forum titled "no more Canadian Idol," and in just over two hours, the sadly inevitable post blaming Steven Harper was up, followed by a quote vaguely attributed to Idol judge Zack Werner lamenting that: "After 6 years the economy has come crashing down on idol. strange that ctv has sponsers for a show on which we watch american kids seek fame and fortune by singing but not enuff sponsers for our own."

Reactions on CTV's forum ranged from skeptical to hysterical, but by 2 p.m. there was a Facebook group devoted to saving the show, and further rumours were circulating between the Facebook site, CTV's forum and VFTW that another network had come to a deal with FremantleMedia and Insight Productions, the show's international and local producers, to take it over. With only two private major networks in the whole country, that would mean Global was being as conspicuously silent as CTV.

As I write this, the "Save Idol" Facebook site has 80 members, and my e-mail source has gone silent, and CTV has finally come back with a terse message that, "As a result of the current economic climate, production of Canadian Idol will rest for the 2009 broadcast year," though they retain the rights to the show. And that was the day that was.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

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In brief

ILLEGAL The federal tribe has spoken: A contaminated monkey skull, termite-infested statues and other African artifacts of the TV show Survivor will not be allowed into the U.S. Officials say Customs inspectors in Houston seized a variety of restricted items that were being shipped to the U.S. in a container belonging to the CBS reality show.

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Kenya Hunt
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TO	Vu	SC	C		7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 12/17/08	265	353	2	TVO	Meerkat Manor	Meerkat Manor	The Agenda With Steve Paikin		New Tricks		The View From Here		Agenda-Paikin
	211	331	3	GTV	ET Canada	Entertainment	Bones		Bones (HDTV PA)		Ancestors in the Attic		News (N)
	215	343	4	OMN1	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons	News (N)		Vivere Il	News (N)	The Simpsons	King of the Hill	Metropia
	210	302	6	CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Mr. Bean	Frosty Returns	Holiday Festival on Ice		CBC News: The National		The Hour
	214	344	7	CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Friends	Friends	Stylista "The Right Fit"		To Be Announced		News (N)
	212	313	8	CTV	etalk	Hollywood	A Muppets Christmas		Criminal Minds "Normal"		CSI: NY (HDTV) (N)		News (N)
	218	345	11	E!	The Insider (N)	E! News	Secret Millionaire (N)		Holidays, Stars	Nastiest Jobs	True Hollywood Story		News (N)
	137	763	13	TFO	Panorama		Les Citadins du rebut global		*Trois saisons* ★★ (1999, Drame) Don Duong.				Enfants
	-	-	14	-	Cold Case "Detention"		News (N)		News (N)		Two-Half Men	King	Cold Case
	213	326	15	SUN	Scrubs	George Lopez	*Psychic* ★ (1991, Suspense) Zach Galligan.				To Serve and Protect		Grill Rm.
	-	387	16	CBS	Inside Edition	Hollywood	Old Christine	Gary Unmarr	Criminal Minds "Normal"		CSI: NY (HDTV) (N)		News (N)
	-	385	17	NBC	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	A Muppets Christmas		Life "Trapdoor" (N)		Law & Order "Zero"		News (N)
	-	386	18	ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Pushing Daisies (N)		Private Practice (N)		(10:01) Dirty Sexy Money		News
	219	346	20	ACH-B	Instant Star	TMZ (N)	Pushing Daisies (N)		Private Practice (N)		(10:01) Dirty Sexy Money		News (N)
	-	-	28	FOX	Judge Judy (N)	Two/Half Men	Secret Millionaire (N)		Bones (HDTV PA)		Seinfeld	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons
	-	388	61	PBS	News-Lehrer	Vicar of Dibley	Great Performances at the Met "La Fille du Régiment"					Classical Dest	Business Rpt.
	297	652	330	WPX	Two/Half Men	Family Guy	Victoria's Secret Fashion		Stylista "The Right Fit"		PIX News at Ten Tong.		Two/Half Men
	296	654	331	SBK	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Dr. Phil (HDTV) (N)		WBZ News (N)	'70s Show	Frasier	Frasier	Punk'd
	298	653	332	TLA	Jamie Foxx	Wayans Bros.	My Wife-Kids	According-Jim	Family Guy	Family Guy	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Victoria's Secr
news	502	390	26	NW	CBC News	Newman	The Hour		CBC News: The National		Disney (N)		National
	500	500	33	CNN	Lou Dobbs Tonight		Campbell Brown: No Bias		Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)		
	509	504	79	CNB	CNBC Reports (HDTV)				On the Money		Harvard Business		Mad Money
sports	405	417	22	net	World Poker Tour		World Poker Tour		Best Damn Sports Show		Sportsnet Connected		Sportsnet Con.
	400	400	30	TSN	That's Hockey!	NHL Pregame	NHL Hockey Calgary Flames at Minnesota Wild. (HDTV) (Live)					SportsCentre	
	411	457	58	OLN	Ed's Up	Videos	Trips Money Can't Buy		Adventures	Ed's Up	Word Travels	Pilot Guides	Pilot Guides
	417	406	81	SC	Pinks	Pass Time	Am. Thunder	Am. Thunder	Pinks	Pinks Outtakes	Wrecked	Wrecked	Pinks
family	551	542	25	YTV	Charlie Brown	Sabrina-Witch	Mon. Warriors	Fresh Prince	Futurama	Prank Patrol	Mystery Hnt.	Adrenaline Proj	Mystery Hnt.
	554	544	45	TEL	Santa Claus	Bugs Bunny & Tweety Show		Wayside	Johnny Test	Futurama	The Critic	Robot Chicken	Daughter-Devil
	556	540	51	FAM	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
cable variety	602	567	27	W	Friends	Will & Grace	Shopping Bags	Shopping Bags	*The Man Who Saved Christmas* (2002, Docudrama), Ed Asner				Maxed Out
	570	580	29	MM	50 Sexiest Videos		50 Sexiest Videos		50 Sexiest Videos		50 Sexiest Videos		Sexiest Videos
	615	520	31	A&E	CSI: Miami "Lost Son"		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Parking Wars	Parking Wars	Parking Wars
	700	800	35	TLN	Centrovetrine	Sky TG 24	Un Ciclone In Famiglia 2				Raymond	Raymond	George Lopez
	571	581	36	MMM	Don't Forget the Lyrics!		Don't Forget the Lyrics!		Don't Forget the Lyrics!		All Time Top 10		Fabulous Life
	575	583	38	CMT	Cheerleaders	Cheerleaders	Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Reba	Reba	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Donner Down
	616	521	39	SHO	Kink in Hair	Kink in Hair	Durham County		Billable Hours	G-Spot	The Starter Wife (N)		House
	620	523	40	BVO	Desperate Housewives		Berkeley	Bravo!Videos	Wingfield	The Letters	Arts & Minds	The Achievers	Law & Order
	601	562	41	SLC	Til Debt-Part	Rich Poor	X-Weighted "Debbi"		Real Housewives of OC		Filthy Rich: Cattle Drive		ET Canada
	522	506	43	HIS	NCIS "Probie"		Cities of the Underworld		Captain Cook: Obsession		NCIS "Probie"		Crime Stories
	625	548	44	COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	Comedy Now	RENO 911!	Daily Show
	600	564	46	H&G	House Hunters	Property Virgin	Mansions	The Stagers	Property Virgin	Unsellable	Million Dollar Listing		Holmes-Homes
	294	529	47	TBS	House-Payne	House-Payne	*G.I. Jane* ★★★ (1997, Drama) Demi Moore, Viggo Mortensen.					Seinfeld	Family Guy
	576	582	49	BET	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live		*South Central* ★★★ (1992, Drama) Glenn Plummer.				Brother	Brother	Black Carpet
	627	528	50	SPC	Lost		Star Trek: Deep Space Nine		Ultimate Super Heroes-Villains		Fields of Fear		Stargate SG-1
	581	566	52	MTV	Busted	After	MTV News	Cribs	Super Sweet	The Hills	Dance Life	Dance Life	MTV Live
	618	524	54	TROP	Beverly Hills, 90210		Reality	What Happen?	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	'70s Show	Family Guy
	603	561	56	FOOD	The Main	Chef at Home	Restaurant Makeover		Iron Chef America		Top Chef		Dinner Imposs.
	261	394	60	V	Murder, She Wrote		Summer Wine	Dinnerladies	*Christmas in Connecticut* ★★ (1945, Comedy)				Christmas
	621	527	63	STR	Look-A-Like	Look-A-Like	TMZ (N)	etalk	DU Why	Britney Back?	The Tonight Show-Jay Leno		TMZ
	553	546	65	TRE	Blue's Room	Nght Grdn	Backyardigans	Yo Gabba	Lost in Snow	Miss Spider	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie Olie	Beren. Bears
	115	711	101	TVA	Km/h (SC)	Poule-oeufs or	*La Panthère rose* ★★ (2006, Comédie)			Juste pour rire	TVA 22 heures	(10:45) Musicographie	
	126	730	102	RDI	24 Heures en 60 minutes		Grands reportages (SC)		Le Téléjournal (SC)		RDI en direct	Le National	Le Téléjournal
	526	507	249	VIVA	Judging Amy		Commander In Chief		The West Wing		Mediums	Psychic Detect	Mediums
	300	601	301	M1	(7:15) *Grindstone Road* (2008, Suspense) Fairuza Balk.				*The Invasion* ★★ (2007, Science Fiction)			(10:40) *Apocalypto*	
	305	612	306	PIX	(7:15) *Blind Terror* ★★ (1999, Suspense), Maxim Roy				*Godzilla* ★★ (1998, Science Fiction) Matthew Broderick, Jean Reno.				

critics' corner

Holiday Festival on Ice
How about those Celtics? No, not the basketball team from Boston — the Celtic music that has made Cape Breton famous. It's featured in this year's edition of the skating special, as Kurt Browning, Jamie Sale and David Pelletier, Sasha Cohen, Jeffrey Buttle, Shawn Sawyer, and others perform to the music of Natalie MacMaster and the Cottars. The theme? "A Celtic Christmas," of course. 9 PM on CBC

A Muppets Christmas: Letters to Santa
If it's half as much fun as "The Muppet Christmas Carol" or the specials they did with John Denver, this new holiday special is going to be a treat. When Kermit and company accidentally intercept three children's letters to St. Nick, they vow to hand-deliver them to the North Pole themselves with a little help from their friends. Whoopi Goldberg, Tony Sirico and Madison Pettis ("Cory in the House") are among their human co-stars. 8 PM on CTV

Watts and Schreiber name son
Actors Naomi Watts and Liev Schreiber have named their new son, born Saturday, Samuel Kai Schreiber. **PEOPLE.COM**

Celebrity Buzz

50 Cent talks of fire

PEOPLE 50 Cent has opened up about the fire that destroyed his home earlier this year, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The rapper, whose real name is Curtis Jackson, refused to openly blame Shaniqua Tompkins for the blaze in May, but did confirm she was ordered to leave his home in Dix Hills, N.Y., just days before it was torched.

"The courts told her she had to leave. It's kind of more like, 'If I can't have you, you can't have it,'" he told Quddus Philippe, a correspondent for U.S. TV show TV One Access.

When Quddus asked the rapper if he believed Tompkins lit the fire, he replied: "Well, I don't want to say that — don't try to make me say something I don't want to say. But, the circumstances to it might seem that way."

Six people, including 50 Cent and Tompkins' 10-year-old son Marquis, were rushed to hospital after the blaze.

Earlier in the year, Tompkins had filed a lawsuit against 50 Cent, claiming he had promised her a house 10 years ago.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Williams denies plans to accept Ledger prize

PEOPLE Heath Ledger's ex-fiancee Michelle Williams has denied she was set to accept any awards the late star wins for his role in The Dark Knight, imdb.com reports.

Ledger's performance as The Joker in the last movie he completed before his drug overdose death in January is expected to earn him a clutch of posthumous prizes during the forthcoming awards season. He is already nominated for the Best Supporting Actor Golden Globe, and is hotly tipped to become the first posthumous acting Oscar winner since Peter Finch in 1977.

Williams, the mother of Ledger's daughter Matilida, was thought to be among those contending to accept awards on her ex's behalf, along with his father Kim.

But the actress won't be involved.

"No discussions have been made for Michelle to accept nor are there any plans to take part," her representative says.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Panettiere treats young patients

SHOPPING Hayden Panettiere took patients from Los Angeles' Children's Hospital on a shopping spree over the weekend, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The actress accompanied five girls on a shopping trip on Saturday. Although Panettiere tried to give the group fashion advice, the kids had their own opinions on which outfits they wanted to choose.

"Not many of them listened to me!" Panettiere said, and laughed.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Washington gets dual citizenship

PEOPLE Former Grey's Anatomy star Isaiah Washington has become an official citizen of Sierra Leone, imdb.com reports.

The actor was born in Houston, Tex., but has spent several months working with Sierra Leone's President Ernest Bai Koroma in a bid to secure dual-nationality and celebrate his family's links to the African country.

President Koroma agreed to grant Washington full citizenship and hand him an official Sierra Leone passport in September.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Spears tops ET's hot list

PEOPLE Pop star Britney Spears has topped ET's annual Hot List, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

Spears took the No. 1 spot in the list, made up of stars who have received the most coverage and mentions on the TV program Entertainment Tonight in the past year.

"From a historical election to surprising splits, sizzling romances and major comebacks, 2008 was a remarkable year for celebrity news," an ET writer said.

TV talk-show host Oprah Winfrey followed Spears on the list.

Rounding off the Top 5 were actor Brad Pitt, U.S. president-Elect Barack Obama and actress Angelina Jolie.

Other celebrities included in the Top 20 were actors George Clooney, Tom Cruise, Jennifer Aniston, Will Smith and Miley Cyrus.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Halliwell spotted with a new beau in Italy

COUPLE Geri Halliwell has a new boyfriend, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The former Spice Girl, who recently split from her long-term partner Ivan (Flipz) Velez, is reportedly romancing a man named Walter.

The pair were pictured sharing a kiss on the dancefloor at a recent Roberto Cavalli fashion launch in Florence, Italy, and have also been seen out shopping together and having lunch.

Halliwell reportedly dumped Velez over the phone in October after six months together.

"Geri said she'd hoped it would be an amazing love-of-her-life romance, but that the spark just wasn't there. She couldn't deal with the distance between them and thought it was best to end it before he got even more hurt," a source said.

Halliwell recently admitted she struggles to commit to a relationship, saying she sometimes fears getting too close to someone.

"I think maybe I am a commitment-phobe," she said. "I definitely have commitment issues. It is lovely to be with somebody and find a connection and be intimate and open, to have companionship and sharing. That is wonderful but I have learnt there are also minuses to that."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Jennifer is a good singer: Mayer

RELATIONSHIPS Jennifer Aniston loves singing and could have a successful music career, according to boyfriend John Mayer, imdb.com reports.

The actress is shy when it comes to showing off her voice, and only does it when she thinks no one else is listening. But Mayer is so impressed by her vocal talents, he's convinced she could become a recording artist.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Richie not working on album

RUMOUR No, Nicole Richie is not working on an album, People.com reports.

Nor is she seeking musical advice from Rihanna or Kelly Osbourne, as a recent report suggested.

"That's not true. Although I think that Rihanna and Kelly Osbourne are very talented, that's completely false," Richie said.

The reality TV star hasn't, however, ruled music out completely.

"I do eventually (want to record an album), but right now I have a lot on my plate," she says.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Phillippe to spend holidays in Australia

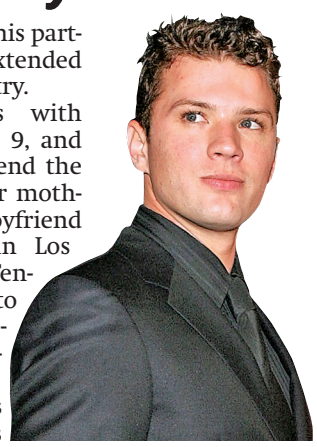
RELATIONSHIPS Actor Ryan Phillippe is set to spend Christmas in Australia meeting his girlfriend's family, imdb.com reports.

Phillippe has been dating actress Abbie Cornish since his split from ex-wife Reese Witherspoon in 2006.

After spending the Thanksgiving holiday last month with his two children by Witherspoon, Phillippe has flown to Australia to enjoy a romantic festive break with his partner, meeting her extended family in the country.

Phillippe's kids with Witherspoon, Ava, 9, and Deacon, 5, will spend the holidays with their mother and her actor boyfriend Jake Gyllenhaal in Los Angeles and Tennessee, according to New York Post gossip column Page-Six.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



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5150 Yonge Street, Unit G3, North York

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WIRELESS DNA
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220 Yonge Street, Level 1, Toronto Eaton Centre
1448 Queen Street West, Toronto
6064 Yonge Street, Toronto
1911 Finch Avenue West, Unit K11, Toronto
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CHANNEL WIRELESS
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Pacific Mall, Unit E28, C3
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UNIPAGE
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Today: Partly sunny 0° / -6°
Thursday: Mainly sunny -2° / -7°
Friday: 90% 10+cm of snow -1° / -12°

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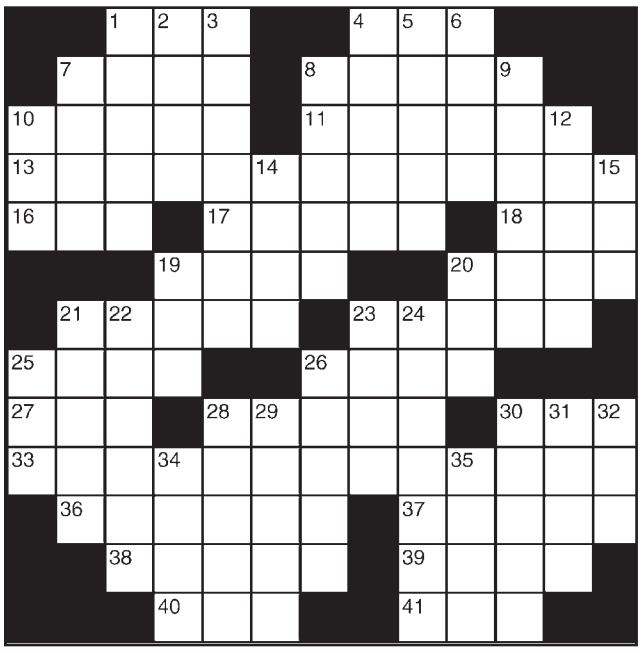
Take Five

For more delicious Metro recipes, visit: **metronews.ca/food**



Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

	7	9				3	5	
			9		7			
6	4			3			1	9
		8	4		3	9		
2								7
		4	2		8	5		
1	6			5			9	2
			1		9			
	2	5				1	4	

Crossword across

1 Sloppy home
4 Fed. watchdog org.
7 Gambling game
8 Vise
10 Had a bug
11 Esteems
13 What Jack did
16 Still, in verse
17 Senior moment
18 Cattle call?
19 Yon maiden's
20 Succotash ingredient
21 Steeple
23 Click-and-drag device
25 Reynolds or Lancaster
26 "Monopoly" pair
27 Blackbird
28 Construction-site machine
30 Bashful
33 Jill's fate
36 Read
37 Standards
38 Looks for
39 Rainbow
40 Dentist's degree (Abbr.)
41 Baseballer's hat

Crossword down

1 Beauty parlor
2 "Star —"
3 Alpine singer
4 Soft silk thread
5 Terpsichore's domain
6 Cupid's specialty
7 Conflagration
8 Fish side dish
9 Ads for upcoming TV shows
10 Honest politician
12 Cussed
14 Tortoise's opponent
15 Negative prefix
19 Smack
20 Prompt
21 Dawn
22 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, etc.
23 Chinese dynasty
24 Vast
25 Cudgel
26 Copenhagen populace
28 Gave hints
29 Puts on the line
30 Denude
31 Fashion lines?
32 Century fractions (Abbr.)
34 Raised
35 "In — penny, in ..."

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

U	T	A	H	■	A	D	O	■	T	R	A	P
S	A	L	E	■	S	E	A	■	H	O	P	E
S	C	A	R	■	P	E	T	E	R	O	S	E
R	O	S	E	H	I	P	■	M	O	T	E	L
■	■	■	S	I	C	■	R	U	M	■	■	■
O	B	E	Y	S	■	H	I	P	B	O	N	E
R	O	O	■	■	B	A	G	■	■	N	O	N
B	O	N	E	D	R	Y	■	S	H	A	R	D
■	■	■	T	E	A	■	A	P	E	■	■	■
G	H	O	U	L	■	D	R	Y	L	A	N	D
L	A	N	D	L	O	R	D	■	P	L	E	A
A	L	E	E	■	F	O	O	■	E	T	A	L
M	O	S	S	■	A	P	R	■	R	O	P	E

2	7	6	9	3	5	1	4	8
4	9	3	2	1	8	7	5	6
5	1	8	6	4	7	2	3	9
3	6	1	5	8	2	9	7	4
8	5	2	7	9	4	3	6	1
9	4	7	1	6	3	5	8	2
7	3	4	8	2	9	6	1	5
1	8	9	3	5	6	4	2	7
6	2	5	4	7	1	8	9	3

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:

Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Pesto-Coated Pork Chops

INGREDIENTS:

6 oz (175 g) eggless noodles
2 cups (500 mL) fresh basil leaves
3 garlic cloves, peeled
1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt
1/2 tsp (2 mL) freshly ground black pepper
2 tbsp (25 mL) plain dry bread crumbs
2 tbsp (25 mL) extra-virgin olive oil
4 centre-cut pork loin chops (1/2 inch/1 cm thick, about 4 oz/125 g each)

METHOD:

1. Prepare noodles according to package directions. Drain and keep hot. Meanwhile, preheat broiler.
2. Put basil, garlic and a pinch each of salt and black pepper in food processor. Pulse until roughly chopped. Add bread crumbs and process 30 seconds until well blended.
3. With motor running, slowly add oil through feed tube until puréed. Set aside.
4. Coat large heavy ovenproof skillet and broiler rack with nonstick cooking spray. Set skillet over high heat until very hot but not smoking. Sprinkle both sides of chops with remaining salt and black pepper. Sauté chops until browned, about 1 minute on each side. Remove from heat. Spread chops on both sides with pesto and transfer to broiler pan.
5. Broil chops until pesto is slightly darker and juices run clear, about 2 minutes on each side. Divide noodles evenly among 4 plates and top with a pork chop.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
You won't become a casualty of love. Phone a funny friend for a surprise. A flaw is found by a friendly person.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Take care on slippery surfaces. Someone's gullibility will scare you. Get a strong grip on your sense of responsibility.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Accept loving attention from your admirers. Someone's intuition gets the better of you. Good fortune comes through being diplomatic.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Somebody's hypochondria will require your patience. An odd stranger intrudes on an important meeting. A mistake leads to mistreatment.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
A researcher uncovers a financial embarrassment. An elder gives evidence of cruelty. You'll need to get out more often..

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
A bureaucrat wins a stupid argument. A professional call causes a delay in plans. You're optimistic in the face of harsh reality.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
A fearless person accepts adjustments gracefully. An egotistical friend will back you up. Too much devotion can be frustrating.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
Try to get through to a coward. A bitter person speaks the truth. A chubby pal's attempts to fix things will resolve nothing.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
Everything's okay with a trustworthy person. A dreadful event leads to a disgrace. Someone is waiting for you to make a tough decision.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
A good friend needs more financial support. A beloved person shows where you went wrong. A flirt breaks up a party.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
A blundering prankster is more fun than usual. Necessary money is made available to those in need. Avoid nasty spats that are counter-productive.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Resistance to an opponent undermines understanding. An innocent is mired in a strange arrangement.

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TICO

This day in history

DEC. 17, 1538: Pope Paul III excommunicates Henry VIII of England.
DEC. 17, 1600: Marriage of Henry IV of France and Marie de' Medici.
DEC. 17, 1718: Great Britain declares war on Spain.
DEC. 17, 1865: First performance of the Unfinished Symphony by Franz Schubert.
DEC. 17, 1903: The Wright Brothers make their first powered and heavier-than-air flight in the Wright Flyer at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

WORDY GURDY®

BY TRICKY RICKY KANE

Every answer is a rhyming pair of words (like FAT CAT and DOUBLE TROUBLE), and they will fit in the letter squares. The number after the definition tells you how many syllables in each word. To win $10, send your original r

1. How-old-you-are measuring standard (1)
2. Daily Planet reporter Lois's jets (1)
3. The B in a BLT seized and carried off (2)
4. Polite bloke's perfumes or aromas (1)
5. Insincerely compliment a baseball hitte
6. Merely one excited sensation (2)
7. Mafioso's surf in "surf and turf" meals (2)

ANSWERS
1. AGE GAUGE 2. LANES PLANES 3. BACON TAKEN 4. CENTS SCENTS
5. FLATTER BATTER 6. SINGLE TINGLE 7. MOBSTERS LOBSTERS

12-17-08

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EX model shown

2009 Rio

- 4-cylinder 1.6L CVVT engine
- Standard 6-way adjustable driver's seat
- AM/FM/CD/MP3 stereo with USB & AUX audio inputs
- Bluetooth® hands-free cell phone capability❖
- 60/40 split-folding rear seats
- Variable intermittent windshield wipers
- Tilt adjustable steering column
- 4-door sedan

OWN IT FROM
$9,995◆
CASH PURCHASE PRICE

HWY: 7.5 L/100KM 38 MPG
CITY: 10.6 L/100KM 27 MPG◆

★★★★★ 5-STAR CRASH TEST RATING
NHTSA - Frontal impacts††

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LX model shown

2009 Rondo

- 4-cylinder 2.4L CVVT, or available 2.7L CVVT V6 engine
- Automatic Steptronic transmission
- Available 7-seater • Standard six airbags
- Standard ABS with Electronic Stability Control & Traction Control System
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- Power windows, locks and heated side mirrors
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HWY: 8.8 L/100KM 32 MPG
CITY: 13.2 L/100KM 21 MPG◆

★★★★★ 5-STAR CRASH TEST RATING
NHTSA - Frontal and side impacts††

TOP SAFETY PICK 2009
INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY

EX model shown

2009 Sedona LX

- 3.8L 24-valve CVVT V6 engine
- 5-speed automatic transmission
- Standard six airbags & ABS
- Extended wheelbase
- Standard back-up warning system

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$19,995◆
CASH PURCHASE PRICE

HWY: 7.8 L/100KM 36 MPG
CITY: 10.3 L/100KM 27 MPG◆

★★★★★ 5-STAR CRASH TEST RATING
NHTSA - Frontal and side impacts††

LX model shown

2009 Sportage

REDESIGNED FOR '09

- 2.0L CVVT, or available 2.7L V6 engine
- Standard six airbags & 4-wheel ABS
- Standard Electronic Stability Control & Traction Control System
- AM/FM/CD/MP3 stereo with USB & AUX audio inputs
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◆Cash purchase price for 2009 Rio EX MT (RO5429)/2009 Sedona LX (SD7519)/2009 Rondo LX AT (RN7519)/2009 Sportage LX MT (SP5519) is $9,995/$19,995/$16,995/$16,995 and includes a cash rebate of $3,600/$6,750/$2,106/$3,806 based on an MSRP of $13,595/$26,745/$19,995/$21,695. Delivery and destination fees of $1,455/$1,650/$1,650/$1,650 excluded. License, registration, insurance, dealer administration fees and taxes are excluded. Other lease and finance options also available. Dealers are free to set individual prices. Prices subject to change without notice. Certain restrictions may apply. ❖0% purchase financing available on all 2009 models for a term of up to 36 months on approved credit (O.A.C.). Term varies by model. ✱No finance payments until April 30, 2009 available on all 2009 models, O.A.C. Maximum terms apply. Purchase financing example: $10,000 at 2.9% purchase financing equals $179 per month for 60 months; cost of borrowing (C.O.B.) is $755 for a total obligation of $10,755. Monthly payment and C.O.B. will vary depending on amount borrowed, the term and down payment/trade. 1% will be added to the applicable interest rate. Offer may not be available through all Kia lending partners. See your local participating Kia dealership for full details. >Highway/city fuel consumption for 2009 Rio EX MT is 5.9 L (48 MPG)/7.3 L (39 MPG); 2009 Sedona LX is 8.8 L (32 MPG)/13.2 L (21 MPG); 2009 Rondo LX is 7.5 L (38 MPG)/10.6 L (27 MPG); 2009 Sportage LX MT is 7.8 L (36 MPG)/10.3 L (27 MPG) per 100km. The actual fuel consumption of these vehicles may vary. These estimates are based on the Government of Canada's approved criteria and testing methods. Refer to the Government of Canada publication EnerGuide Fuel Consumption Guide. ‡Green Score for Kia Rio/Rondo based on manual/automatic transmission specification within their segment. Refer to GreenerCars.org for full details. ††NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) test results. Visit www.safercar.gov for full details. ✣2009 Sedona awarded the Top Safety Pick by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. Visit www.iihs.org for full details. ^Conditions apply to the $500 Grad Rebate program; see dealer for details. ✣Some conditions may apply to the $750 Kia Mobility program. See dealer for details. ❖Bluetooth technology and SIRIUS® Satellite Radio available on select 2009 models. © 2008 SIRIUS Canada Inc. See dealer for details. Price, availability and specifications are subject to changes without notice. Some vehicles advertised may include optional accessories or after-sale equipment and may not be exactly as shown. Information in this advertisement is believed to be accurate at the time of print. Offer ends January 2, 2009 and is valid for residents of Ontario/Manitoba only. KIA is a trademark of Kia Motors Corporation. ◆◆Kia's "Worry-Free Comprehensive" warranty covers most vehicle components against defects occurring under normal use and maintenance conditions. Bluetooth® is a registered trademark of Bluetooth SIG, Inc. ▼Kia's "Worry-Free Comprehensive" warranty covers most vehicle components against defects occurring under normal use and maintenance conditions. ▼▼Late availability on Bluetooth hands-free option.